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CONFESSIO AMANTIS



GOWER'S CONFESSION OF A LOVER

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I.



CONFESSIO AMANTIS OF

**I**ohn **C**ollier

EDITED AND COLLATED  
WITH THE BEST MANUSCRIPTS BY  
DR. REINHOLD PAULI



VOL. I.

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## INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

### I.—LIFE OF JOHN GOWER.



THE materials for a biography of John Gower the poet are scanty, and quite insufficient for a sketch of his personal history; and his writings contain very few of those allusions to himself which are so frequently met with in similar works. The date of his birth is unknown, and within seventy years of his death his descent and the place of his birth seem to have been entirely forgotten. Caxton, who in 1483 printed the first edition of the *Confessio Amantis*, styles him, *Johan Gower squyer borne in Walys in the tyme of kyng richard the second*; Gower being the name of a family of some repute, resident in a district of South Wales called Gowerland, which occurs occasionally in the public records of the poet's day;\* but beyond Caxton's assertion, no proof that he was a native of the principality is known to exist. We have no direct evidence

\* Henry le Gower, the well known bishop of St. David's, died in 1347. Thomas Gower, *Burgensis ville de Havreford in Suthwallia*, occurs on Rot. Pat. 18 Ric. II. p. 1. memb. 22.

that he was educated either at Oxford or Cambridge, though his great knowledge in all branches of medieval learning, especially as displayed in his *Confessio Amantis*, affords a strong presumption, that he must have been a student at one of the universities. It is one of the many inventions of Leland,\* that Gower was a lawyer; others have made him a member of the Temple and even a judge; there is however as little proof of such representations as of those respecting Chaucer having belonged to the legal profession: nor does it appear that a judge bearing the name of Gower sat on the bench during the fourteenth century.† It is certain, however, that he was the owner of much landed property, and received a learned education; and his compositions in Latin, French and English, prove that he was a highly cultivated English gentleman, and one of the earliest poets in his mother-tongue.

The next mention of the poet occurs in Leland, who heard‡ that he belonged to the ancient family of the Gowers of Stitenham in Yorkshire, the ancestors of the marquis of Stafford, which family, tradition states, came from Brittany with William the Conqueror in his expedition to England. This statement has been repeated by Bale, Pitts, and Holinshed, who contented themselves with merely copying from Leland; but the late Rev. Henry J. Todd§ has attempted to support it by documentary evidence, which, he asserts, remained un-

\* *Commentarii de Script. Brit.* p. 414. Coluit forum et patrias leges lucris causa.

† *Foss, Judges of England*, iv. p. 28.

‡ *Commentarii de Scriptoribus Britannicis*, ed. Hall, p. 414. Johannes Goverus, vir equestris ordinis, ex Stitenhamo, villa Eboracensis provincie, ut ego accepi, originem ducens, etc.

§ *Illustrations of the Lives and Writings of Gower and Chaucer*, London, 1810.



noticed up to his time. Mr. Todd's evidence however has, unfortunately for his argument, very little foundation. He expresses his desire "to connect, according to a proud family tradition, the poet Gower with that illustrious house of the same name," and conjectures that a remarkable manuscript of the *Confessio Amantis*, of which the marquis of Stafford was then in possession, and which is now the property of the earl of Ellesmere, "was a present from the author to one of the Gower family soon after the completion of the work."\* It will appear hereafter, how very slightly Mr. Todd examined this manuscript.

He mentions also, as further evidence of this Family connexion, a deed in the archives of the marquis of Stafford executed by Robert de Ranclif of Stitenham, dated the Wednesday next after Easter, the 19th of April 1346, which was witnessed amongst others by a John Gower. But this charter is indorsed, as Mr. Todd himself remarks, "in the handwriting of at least a century later."† "1346. *Johannes Gower, wittnes only Sr John Gower the poet.*"

Mr. Todd has likewise published the poet's last will; but this document has not the slightest reference to Yorkshire, and a number of records exist in which property of the very same testator, situated in several southern and eastern counties, is mentioned.

Since Todd's publication other particulars have been brought to light, principally through the research of that indefatigable genealogist and antiquary, the late Sir Harris Nicolas, which go far to show, that the poet belonged altogether to a different family, and that he was born and dwelt in Kent, where he possessed considerable pro-

\* Illustrations of Chaucer and Gower, p. 109.

† Ibid. p. xviii. 91.

perty. Sir H. Nicolas observes,\* that "the strongest evidence against the opinion, that the poet was of the Yorkshire family of Gower, exists in the entire difference of their arms." On the poet's tomb in Southwark and on a seal attached to a deed executed by John Gower and dated 1373, the same coat is emblazoned, thus demonstrating that the poet and this John Gower are one and the same person. These arms are Argent on a chevron, Azure, three leopards' heads, Or. Both crests are also identical, on a chapeau a talbot passant. Whereas the Gowers of Stitenham bear Barry, Argent, and Gules, a cross patee flore, Sable; and for their crest a wolf passant, Argent, collared and chained, Or. Sir Harris Nicolas on the authority of one of the Cottonian MSS. (Julius C. vii. fol. 152) states that there was living at the same period another John Gower, who bore a coat entirely different from the two families above mentioned. He was a party to a deed with Ralph Spigurnell and Sir John de Byshopston, dated Westminster, the 20th of August 1359, and enrolled on Rot. Pat. 33 Edw. III. p. 11. membr. 6. By this instrument the king confirms to him and others certain grants for life made by Roger Mortimer, earl of March. One of the manors granted is that of Bridgewater in Somerset, with which the descendants of the Gowers of Stitenham have only recently been connected.

In the fourteenth century a family of respectability of the name of Gower dwelt in Suffolk and probably resided occasionally in Kent, to which attention was first drawn by Weever,† who, when mentioning the epitaph of Sir Robert Gower on his tomb at Brabourne, adds: "From this familie John Gower the poet was descended."

Sir Robert Gower, knight, obtained on the 25th of June

\* Retrospective Review, Second Series, II. p. 111.

† Funeral Monuments, p. 270, fol. 1631.



1333 from David de Strabolgi, earl of Athol, who was killed in the Scotch wars in 1335, a grant of the manor of Kentwell with its appurtenances in Suffolk. Sir Robert died in or before the year 1349, for the said manor was granted at that time to Katherine, Countess of Athol, to hold until the heirs of the deceased became of age.\* He was buried in the church of Brabourne near Ashford in Kent, where a brass monument was formerly preserved with his effigy, holding a shield charged with the same arms as those on the poet's tomb and on the seal of the above-mentioned deed executed by John Gower in 1373. Sir Robert Gower left two daughters as his heirs, of whom Katherine, the elder, died in the year 1366, and her sister Joan, the wife of William Neve of Wyting, succeeded her in her moiety of Kentwell. Neve must have died within two years of that date, for on the 28th June 1368 Thomas Syward, pewterer and citizen of London, and Joan his wife, daughter of Sir Robert Gower, knight, granted the manor of Kentwell in Suffolk to John Gower,† who certainly was the next heir and a near relative to Joan, though we do not learn whether he was her cousin, nephew, or brother.

By a deed executed at Orford, on Thursday the 30th of September 1373, John Gower conferred the whole of his manor of Kentwell in Suffolk upon John Cobham, knight, William Weston, Roger Ashburnham, Thomas Brokhill, and Thomas Preston, rector of Tunstall. Some of the feoffees, especially Sir John Cobham, resided in Kent, and the document was likewise executed in that county. Can it be a mere coincidence, says Sir Harris Nicolas, that the poet in his will mentions his manor of

\* Nicolas, *Retrosp. Rev.* p. 107, from the original charters and inquiries.

† *Ibid.* pp. 107-8.



Multon in Suffolk, which is scarcely fifteen miles distant from Kentwell, and appoints Sir Arnold Savage, a Kentish knight, whose family was closely related to the Cobhams, and William Denne likewise of Kent, to be his executors ?\* It appears far more probable that John Gower the owner of Multon, and John Gower the owner of Kentwell, who bore the same arms, lived at the same time, held property in Suffolk, and possessed at least friends in Kent, was one and the same person.

The name of Gower does not occur very frequently either in royal or private grants, and that of John Gower is still rarer. All records therefore in which a John Gower is mentioned as having lived during the second part of the fourteenth century in *Suffolk* and *Kent*, may reasonably be referred to the poet himself, and not to the Gowers of Stitenham, from whom the present noble family of Gower is descended.

Fortunately a careful search of the Close Rolls of Edward III. and Richard II., undertaken for the purpose, has yielded some evidence unknown to previous writers, which converts the conjecture of Sir Harris Nicolas into a certainty. The first document bearing upon the subject is a charter dated the 1st of August 1382, by which Guy de Rowcliffe, clerk, grants and confirms the manor of Feltwell in the county of Norfolk and the manor of Multon in Suffolk, which had been granted to him by Thomas de Catherton, to John Gower, *esquire of Kent*, to have and to hold in fee to the said John Gower and his heirs male by due and accustomed services. The next is a deed dated the 3rd of August 1382, by which John Gower, *esquire of Kent*, releases for ever to Guy de Rowcliffe, clerk, who had granted to him and his heirs on the 1st of August the manors of Feltwell and Multon, all manner of warranty

\* Retrospective Review, p. 106.

for the said manors. This release was acknowledged in Chancery by the aforesaid John Gower in person on the 28th of the same month.\*

These instruments show that John Gower belonged to the county of Kent, and that on the 1st August 1382 he became legally possessed of the manors of Feltwell in Norfolk and Multon in Suffolk; mention is also made of the Manor of Multon in Suffolk in his will, which proves almost to demonstration, that the John Gower referred to in those deeds was also the author of the *Confessio Amantis*, who lies buried in St. Saviour's, Southwark, and whose will has happily been preserved at Lambeth Palace.

On the 6th August 1382, John Gower the poet granted his manors of Feltwell and Multon to Thomas Blake-lake, parson of the church of St. Nicholas at Feltwell and four other persons for the sum of £40 to be paid annually in the conventual Church at Westminster. This indenture was entered in Chancery on the 24th of October in the same year, and the same grant was repeated on the 29th of February, 1384.†

Two similar documents remain to be mentioned. By one dated the 3rd of February 1381, 4 Ric. II. Isabella, daughter of Walter de Huntingfield, remits all the right and claim she has from her father to certain lands and tenements belonging to the parishes of Throwley and Stalessfield in the county of Kent to John Gower and John Bowland, clerk.‡ By the other dated the 10th of June

\* Rot. Claus. 6 Ric. II. p. 1. memb. 27 dorso. Both documents are in French: *Sachent toutes gentz moy Guy de Rouclif' Clerc' auoir donee grauntee et par ceste ma chartre conferme a Johan Gower Esquier de Kent etc. A tous iceux, qui cestes lettres verront ou orront, Johan Gower Esquier de Kent salut en dieux. Sachez que come Guy de Rouclyf' Clerc' etc.*

† Rot. Claus. 6 Ric. II. p. 1. membr. 23 dorso. Rot. Claus. 7 Ric. II. membr. 17 dorso. see Retr. Rev. p. 117.

‡ Rot. Claus. 4 Ric. II. membr. 15 dorso, entered in Chancery on the 28th March.



1385, 8 Ric. II. the same Isabella, daughter and heir of Walter de Huntingfield of the county of Kent, remits to John Gower *of the same county* for herself and her heirs all actions, plaints, and demands which may have arisen between them from the beginning of the world up to the present day.\* In the document dated the 3rd February 1381 Gower is not described as belonging to the county of Kent; perhaps he did not enter upon his property in that county until the year in which the great rebellion of the Commons took place; an event which he has so circumstantially noticed in his Latin poem the *Vox Clamantis*.

In 39 Edw. III. 1365, William, son of Sir William Septvanvs, knight, granted to John Gower and his heirs a rental of ten pounds out of the manor of Wygebergh in Essex, and released to him and his heirs by a second instrument the manor of Aldyngton in Kent with the rent of 14s. 6d. and of one cock, thirteen hens, and forty eggs out of Maplescomb.† From this it would appear that Gower also possessed property in Essex.

But the only reliable facts to be gathered from these documents are, that John Gower the poet, if not the direct descendant, was at least the heir of a knight, whose property was situated in Suffolk, and who was buried in Kent; that the poet called himself esquire of the county of Kent; that he held various manors at least in three, if not in more counties; that he was careful in entering for his own security all leases and releases to which he was a party on the rolls of Chancery, and that he was a member of an opulent family in the south of England.

An extract from the register of W<sup>m</sup> de Wykeham

\* Rot. Claus. 8 Ric. II. membr. 5 dorso, entered in Chancery on the same day, in perpetuum quietum clamasse Johanni Gower de eodem Comitatu.

† Rot. Claus. 39 Edw. III. membr. 21 dorso.

preserved in the registry of Winchester mentions the marriage of a John Gower to Agnes Groundolf at St. Mary Magdalen's, Southwark, on the 25th of January, 1397, and the facts that the poet's wife was named Agnes and that he does not mention any issue in his will suggest the inference that the person mentioned is John Gower the poet, and that he was not married until he reached old age.\*

His tastes and perhaps residence in the same vicinity may have occasioned an intimacy between him and his great contemporary and brother poet Chaucer, who like himself was connected with the county of Kent; but we do not find any evidence to show that they were fellow students either at Oxford or in the Temple: although when Chaucer, soon after the accession of Richard II., was sent on a mission to the Continent, he, in a deed dated the 21st May, 1378, appointed John Gower and Richard Forrester his attorneys during his absence.† That the two poets were friends, and considered each other fellow labourers, is satisfactorily confirmed by the compliments they pay each other in some of their works. Chaucer inserts at the end of *Troilus and Creseide* a dedication:

*"O morall Gower, this booke I direct  
To thee and to the philosophicall Strode,*

\* Willelmus permissione divina Wyntonienfis Episcopus, dilecto in Christo filio, domino Willelmo, capellano parochiali ecclesiæ S. Mariæ Magdalænæ in Suthwerk, nostræ diocesis, salutem, gratium, et benedictionem. Ut matrimonium inter Joannem Gower et Agnetem Groundolf dictæ ecclesiæ parochianos sine ulteriore bannorum editione, dumtamen aliud canonicum non obstat, extra ecclesiam parochialem, in Oratorio ipsius Joannis Gower infra hospicium cum in prioratu B. Mariæ de Overee in Suthwerk prædicta situatum, solemnizare valeas licenciam tibi tenore præsentium, quatenus ad nos attinet concedimus specialem. In cujus rei testimonium sigillum nostrum fecimus his apponi. Dat. in manerio nostro de alta clera vicesimo quinto die mensis Januarii A. D. 1397, et nostræ consecrationis 31mo.

† Nicolas, *Life of Chaucer*, pp. 37, 125.



*To vouchsafe there need is to correct  
Of your benignities and zeales good.”\**

The epithet moral is applied very properly to the general character of Gower's writings ; and it may be remarked, that Chaucer's desire that Gower should correct whatever was needed, shows that he considered him a competent judge in matters of poetry.

As if in answer to this compliment, Gower makes Venus say in some copies of the *Confessio Amantis* :

*“ And grete well Chaucer, whan ye mete,  
As my disciple and my poete.  
For in the floures of his youth,  
In sundry wise, as he well couth,  
Of dittees and of songes glade,  
The which he for my sake made,  
The lond fulfilled is over all,  
Wherof to him in speciall  
Above all other I am most bolde.  
Forthy now in his daies olde  
Thou shalt him telle this message,  
That he upon his later age  
To sette an ende of all his werke  
As he, which is min owne clerke,  
Do make his testament of love,  
As thou hast do thy shrifte above,  
So that my court it may recorde.”†*

Nevertheless it has been suggested that their friendship was afterwards interrupted,‡ and the following reasons

\* Aldine edition, 1845, v. 172.

† See the present edition, Vol. III. p. 374.

‡ Tyrwhitt, *Introductory Discourse to the Canterbury Tales*, § 14. Todd, *Illustrations*, p. xxvii ; and Godwin, *Life of Chaucer*, II. p. i. *et seq.*



have been adduced in support of the conjecture. Chaucer declaims in the Prologue to the *Man of Lawes Tale*\* against such dreadful and lewd tales—"unkinde abominations"—as he calls them, as those of Canace and Appollinus of Tyre, which are undoubtedly amongst the best stories told in the *Confessio Amantis*. Tyrwhitt first suspected this to be a direct attack by Chaucer on Gower, with whom Godwin imagines he must have quarrelled. However, it has not escaped Tyrwhitt, that the *Man of Lawes Tale* and that of the *Wife of Bath* are either directly borrowed from Gower, or have been taken by both poets from one common source. It is therefore highly improbable, that Chaucer, speaking in the person of the *Man of Law*, really intended to express in such a strange manner his disrespect for a friend, who like himself had attained to an advanced age. Another supposition for the disturbance of their friendship has arisen from the complimentary verses on Chaucer, which only appear in the loyal edition addressed to king Richard II, having been omitted in a number of copies of the *Confessio Amantis*, dedicated to Henry of Lancaster. But this may be thus accounted for. The verses occur at the end of the poem, and the Lancaster copy which appeared in 1392-3, at a time when Chaucer was in trouble with the existing government, terminates altogether differently;† it is therefore not unlikely, that Gower, timid and obsequious by nature, had some reason for not mentioning his friend in the edition destined for the acceptance and perusal of Henry. The omission may show selfish feeling on the part of Gower; but it certainly does not prove that their friendship was interrupted.

In the 17th year of Richard II. 1393-4, Henry of Lancaster presented "un esquier John Gower," "perhaps"

\* Aldine edition, ii. 135.

† Nicolas, *Life of Chaucer*, p. 50.

one of that prince's retainers, with a collar. The poet is represented on his tomb with a collar of SS, to which a swan, Henry's badge, is appended; but, as that badge is believed not to have been assumed by Henry until after the demise of Thomas of Woodstock, duke of Gloucester, in September 1397, the swan may have been given to Gower at a subsequent period.\* It does not seem too much to presume, that the collar was presented to the poet as a direct acknowledgment of the dedication of his work, which, as has already been mentioned, was addressed in the previous year to Henry earl of Derby.

In the year 1400, about the time when Chaucer died, Gower, who in the dedication to the *Confessio Amantis* had previously complained of sickness,† became blind from old age, and in the year following was obliged to give up writing, as appears from some Latin verses, which are found in several MSS.‡ Feeling the approach of death, he abandoned to others writing about the things of this world, and made preparations for a pious end.§

\* Nicolas, in *Retrosp. Rev.* p. 117, from a record in the Duchy of Lancaster Office.

† *Though I sikenesse have upon bonde*, vol. 1. p. 4, 5.

‡ Printed in Thynne's edition of Chaucer, 1532. fo. 377., b. and, with some variation, in *Balades and other Poems of John Gower*, Roxburghe Club, 1818. It has the following Epigraph:

"Explicit carmen de pacis commendatione, quod ad laudem et memoriam serenissimi principis domini regis Henrici quarti suis humilis orator Johannes Gower composuit."

"Henrici quarti primus regni fuit annus,  
Quo mihi defecit visus ad acta mea," etc.

and in MSS. of *Vox Clamantis*:—

"Henrici regis annus fuit ille secundus,  
Scribere dum cessô, sum quia cecus ego."

See *Retr. Rev.* p. 116.

§ *Ibid.*

"Vana tamen mundi mundo scribenda reliqui  
Scriboque finali carmine vado mori.  
Scribat qui veniet post me discrecior alter,  
Ammodo namque manus et mea penna silent."



A circumstantial will was executed by him on the day of the Assumption of the holy Virgin, the 15th August 1408 in the Priory of St. Mary Overy's, the mother-church of Southwark. By it he bequeaths to the Prior, the Sub-prior, the Canons and the servants of the said convent liberal donations varying from £1 to 1 shilling each; he makes similar gifts to the church of St. Mary Magdalen and the four parish churches in Southwark,—St. Margaret's, St. George's, St. Olave's, and St. Mary Magdalen's near Bermondsey—for lamps, garments, and prayers for his soul; and he leaves other sums to the masters and inmates of the Hospitals of St. Thomas the Martyr in Southwark, St. Thomas Elsing'spital, Bedlam, Bishopsgate without, and St. Mary's, Westminster. He desires that his body shall be buried in the Chapel of St. John the Baptist in St. Mary Overy's, and he bequeaths as a perpetual gift for the altar in the said chapel two costly filken priest's dresses, a large new missal, and a new chalice. The Prior and Convent are also to preserve in memory of him a large book entitled *Martilogium* (Martyrologium), which had recently been written out at his own expense. He next leaves a hundred pounds to his wife Agnes, who is not mentioned in any other document. She is likewise to retain three cups, one coverlet, two saltcellers and twelve spoons of silver, and to have all his beds and chests with all the appurtenances of hall, pantry, and kitchen, a chalice and garment for the altar of their private chapel, and for the time she survives her husband the full enjoyment of all rents due to him from the lease of his two manors, Southwell in Nottingham, and Multon in Suffolk. He appoints his said wife; Sir Arnold Savage, knight; an esquire Robert; William Denne, canon of the king's chapel; and John Burton, clerk; his executors. The will was proved by Agnes Gower at Lambeth before Archbishop Thomas Arundel on the 24th of October;

and the administration of the property not specified therein was granted to her on the 7th of November following.\* Consequently the poet must have died between the 15th of August and 24th of October in that year.

Several subjects connected with this document must remain undecided. A search made for the poet's title to the manor of Southwell in Nottingham has been unsuccessful. No mention is made of his property in Kent, Essex, and Norfolk, and there is no clause whatever referring to a son and heir. It is asserted by Sir Harris Nicolas:† "that such an omission renders it unlikely that he had issue, but it is not conclusive. It is manifest from the probate,‡ that he had other property than that spoken of in his will, and if he had only one son, or if he had female issue only, he or they would have succeeded to it; hence it was not requisite, that he should specially provide for them by legacies." The research of the same distinguished genealogist has connected, as the probable descendants of the poet, such persons of the name of Gower as occur in Kent and Surrey during the fifteenth century.§

Another important record concerning Gower is preserved on his tomb and monument still extant in St. Mary Overy's, now St. Saviour's Southwark, of which Blore|| has given a good engraving and the following description:

"The monument of John Gower is in the Chapel of St. John,¶ in the north aisle of the nave of St. Mary Overy's,

\* *Johanna Gower nuper defuncti*, see Testament, Todd, Illustrations, p. 87. Blore, Sepulchral Antiquities, and Nicolas, Retr. Rev. p. 103.

† Retr. Rev. p. 111.

‡ Pro eo, quod idem defunctus nonnulla bona optinuit in diversis diocesis nostris Cantuariensis provincie.

§ See pedigree, Retr. Rev. p. 114.

|| The monumental remains of noble and eminent persons comprising the Sepulchral Antiquities of Great Britain, 1826.

¶ The chapel of St. John has long since disappeared; the tomb stood



commonly called St. Saviour's Church, in Southwark. It is entirely of stone, and consists of a canopy of three arches with bouquet [crocketed] pediments, parted by finials, and at the back of each pediment three niches, of which there are also seven in front of the altar tomb." Berthelette, in the introduction to his edition of the *Confessio Amantis*, published in 1532, gives the following description of the representations of Charity, Mercy, and Pity, now nearly obliterated, which were painted against the wall within the three upper arches. "Beside on the wall where he lieth, there be painted three virgins, with crownes on their heades, one of the whiche is written Charitie, and she holdeth this diuise in hir hande:—

*"En toy qui est filz de dieu le pere  
Sauve soit qui gist souz cest pierre.*

"The second is written Mercie, which holdeth in hir hande this diuise:—

*"O bon Jesu fait ta mercie  
Al alme, dont le corpe gist icy.*

"The thyrde of them is written Pitee, whiche holdeth in hir hande this diuise followynge:—

*"Pour ta Pite Jesu regarde  
Et met cest alme en sauve garde."*

On the top of the altar tomb is the effigy of the poet; his head reclining on three volumes, representing his three great works and inscribed with their respective titles. The hair falls in large curls on his shoulders, and is crowned with a chaplet of four roses, originally, as Leland\* tells us, intermixed with ivy, "in token, says Berthelette, that a little westward of the north transept, until 1830, when it was removed into the south transept.

\* *Commentarii*, p. 415. Habet ibidem statuam duplici insignem nota, nempe aureo torque et hederacea corona rosis interferta, illud militis, hoc poetæ ornamentum.



he in his life daies, flourished freshely in literature and science." It is inscribed, *ihī merci*. A long robe, closely buttoned down the front, extends from the neck to the feet, which are entirely covered. A collar of SS., from which is suspended a small swan, chained, the badge of Henry IV, hangs from his neck; his feet rest upon a lion, and above, within a panel of the side of the canopy, a shield is suspended, charged with his arms, Argent on a chevron, Azure, three leopards' heads, Or; crest, on a cap of maintenance, a talbot sejant [passant]. Under the figure of Mercy are these lines:—

*Armigeri scutum nihil a modo fert tibi tutum;  
Reddidit immolatum morti generale tributum;  
Spiritus exutum regaudeat esse solutum  
Est ubi virtutum regnum sine labe statutum.*

On the ledge of the tomb was an inscription, now entirely gone:—

*Hic jacet J. Gower, arm.  
Angl. poeta celeberrimus ac  
Huic sacro edificio benefac. insignis.  
Vixit temporibus Ed. III. et R. II.*

Adjoining the monument there hung originally a table granting 1500 days' pardon, "ab ecclesia rite concessos," for all those who devoutly prayed for his soul.\*

It is affirmed by Leland,† that Gower was one of the principal benefactors of the Priory of St. Mary Overy's, which had been burnt down in 1212, and that he contributed considerable sums towards rebuilding it in the reign of Richard II. His monument has been repaired three times; first in 1615, next in 1764, and lastly in 1830 by earl Gower, marquis of Stafford, the present duke of Sutherland.

\* Caxton's Edition of the *Confessio Amantis*, 1483, fol. 211<sup>b</sup>.

† *Commentarii*, p. 416, & *Collectanea*, i, p. 106.

## II.—HIS WRITINGS AND CHARACTER.

A YOUNG and healthy literature is generally the offspring of some remarkable epoch in the history of the nation to which it belongs; for men's minds are fertilized and invigorated by the actions of great political events, and an impulse is given to their imagination and language, which more tranquil times would probably never have evoked. This observation especially applies to England in the fourteenth century, when the long reign of Edward III. had been marked by circumstances the most varied and extraordinary in its history. The eyes of all Europe were fixed for a time on a struggle between two empires for the crown of one of them. Great wars with France had been crowned with unparalleled success to the arms of the king and his brave son; but at last a sudden check reversed the splendid picture. The once glorious king, borne down by premature old age and decay of intellect, saw nearly all his conquests snatched from him, and the security of his island empire menaced by the enemy, while his people, who for many years had borne the burden of the war with cheerful patriotism, for which they had obtained concessions of inestimable political rights, began to clamour against the king's ill success, and to demand a direct share in the administration of public affairs. The vicious and corrupt state of the church had brought on the first serious attempt at a reformation; and a bold and honest priest had risen to preach the Gospel in the vernacular tongue "free and truly." The whole order of things as they then existed seemed on the point of collapsing, when Edward, by this time become a wretched dotard, died in the arms



of a concubine, and his grandson, a mere boy, succeeded to the throne. Ere Richard had reigned four years, the Commons, who had long viewed with indignation the possession of wealth and the exclusive enjoyment of political privileges by the higher orders of society, and who had imbibed very erroneous ideas of property, government, and religion, revolted, and for a moment threatened the country with a general conflagration. Their rising struck terror into the hearts of the more peaceable part of the community. Nor were the disasters consequent on this event unaccompanied by others of equal gravity. Crown and country being both exhausted, no fresh successes against the French were obtained, and a spirit of discontent began rapidly to pervade all classes. This young and headstrong prince made two dangerous attempts to wrest from the people what they claimed as their ancient and hard earned rights, and for a short time succeeded in ruling them with true despotism; but the century closed with his deposition, the accession of a skilful usurper and a universal reaction in church and state.

Nevertheless not only did civil and religious liberty take so firm a root as to enable it to withstand the most violent political tempests of succeeding ages, but the first blossoms of English literature, forerunners of repeated brilliant displays of genius, began to expand during this period, and it is as one of the earliest labourers in this hitherto uncultivated field, that John Gower will ever be honourably mentioned.

At the beginning of the fourteenth century, there existed in England no national language; the court, nobility, parliament, and even the courts of law spoke French, the church generally made use of Latin, and public acts were written in either language, while the descendants of the Anglo-Saxon race employed a dialect of direct Saxon

derivation, but modified and softened by time, and occasionally mixed up with words of Romance origin. These three tongues, from all of which the English language was rapidly forming itself, remained in public use throughout the century. In 1362 Parliament was first opened by a speech in English, and the courts of law subsequently adopted the same language; Chaucer had already begun to write, and Gower, whose earlier works had been composed in French and Latin, now used his mother-tongue. There is no better illustration of this singular transition to the English language than a short enumeration and description of Gower's writings.

The head of the figure sculptured on his tomb reclines on three volumes representing his three great works, written in as many languages: the *Speculum Meditantis*, the *Vox Clamantis*, and the *Confessio Amantis*. Several MSS. and Caxton's edition of the English poem contain the following short characteristic sketch of each of them drawn up probably by the poet himself, but differing, like his two editions of the *Confessio Amantis*, according to his position in relation to the political events of the day.

Quia unusquisque prout  
a Deo accepit aliis impartire  
tenetur, Johannes Gower  
super hiis que Deus sibi in-  
tellectualiter donavit, villi-  
cacionis sue rationem dum  
tempus instat secundum ali-  
quid alleviare cupiens, inter  
labores et ocia ad aliorum  
noticiam tres libros doctrine  
causa forma subsequenti  
propterea composuit.

Primus liber Gallico ser-

Quia unusquisque prout  
a Deo accepit aliis impartiri  
tenetur, Johannes Gower  
super hiis que Deus sibi  
sensualiter donavit, villica-  
cionis sue rationem dum  
tempus instat secundum ali-  
quod alleviare cupiens, inter  
labores et ocia ad aliorum  
noticiam tres libros doctrine  
causa forma subsequenti  
propterea composuit.

Primus liber Gallico ser-



mone editus in decem dividitur partes et tractans de viciis et virtutibus necnon de variis huius seculi gradibus viam, qua peccator transgressus ad sui creatoris agnitionem redire debet, recto tramite docere conatur. Titulus libelli istius *Speculum hominis* nuncupatus est.

Secundus enim liber sermone Latino versibus exametri compositus tractat super illo mirabili eventu, qui in Anglia tempore Regis Ricardi Secundi anno regni sui quarto contigit, quando serviles rustici impetuose contra nobiles et ingenuos regni insurrexerunt, innocentiam tamen dicti Domini Regis tunc junioris etatis causam inde excusabilem pronuncians culpas aliunde, et quibus et non a fortuna talia inter homines contingunt enormia, evidencius declarat. Titulusque voluminis huius, cuius ordo septem continet pagas, *Vox Clamantis* nominatur.

Tercius iste liber Anglico sermone in octo partes divisus, qui ad instanciam

mone editus in decem dividitur partes et tractans de viciis et virtutibus necnon de variis huius seculi gradibus viam, qua peccator transgressus ad sui creatoris agnitionem redire debet, recto tramite docere conatur. Titulusque libelli istius *Speculum Meditantis* nuncupatus est.

Secundus enim liber sermone Latino metrico compositus tractat de variis infortuniis tempore Regis Ricardi Secundi in Anglia contingentibus, unde non solum regni proceres et communes tormenta passi sunt, set et ipse crudelissimus Rex suis ex demeritis ab alto corruens in foveam quam fecit finaliter proiectus est. Nomenque voluminis huius *Vox Clamantis* intituitur.

Tercius iste liber qui ob reverenciam strenuissimi domini sui Domini Henrici

ferenissimi Principis dicti Domini Regis Anglie Ricardi Secundi conficitur secundum Danielis prophetiam super huius mundi regnorum mutacione a tempore Regis Nabogodonosor usque nunc tempora distinguit. Tractat etiam secundum Nectanabum et Aristotelem super hiis, quibus Rex Alexander tam in sui regimine quam aliter amorem et amantum condiciones fundamentum habet, ubi variarum cronicarum historiarumque finem necnon poetarum philosophorumque Scripture ad exemplum distinctius inferuntur. Nomenque presentis opusculi *Confessio Amantis* specialiter nuncupatur.

de Lancastria tunc Derby Comitis Anglico sermone conficitur secundum Danielis prophetiam super huius mundi regnorum mutacione a tempore Regis Nabogodonosor usque nunc tempora distinguit. Tractat etiam secundum Aristotelem super hiis, quibus Rex Alexander tam in sui regimine quam aliter eius discipline edoctus fuit. Principale tamen huius operis materia super amorem et infatuatas amantum passionibus fundamentum habet. Nomenque sibi appropriatum *Confessio Amantis* specialiter fortitus est.\*

The French poem is placed first in order, and there is sufficient reason to believe, that Gower in the earlier part of his career chiefly made use of this language. No copy of the *Speculum Meditantis* has yet been discovered; what Warton† and his copyists erroneously describe as such, is another short French poem under the title, “Un Traitee selonc les aucteurs pour ensamplier les amants marietz au fin qils la foy de lour seints espousailles pourront pur fine loyale garder et al honeur de Dieu

\* MS. Harl. 3869, fol. 366, and Caxton, fol. 210<sup>b</sup>.

† History of English Poetry, ed. 1840, II. p. 226.



salvement tener." This work is occasionally met with in manuscript, and has been partially printed.\* The contents, examples from mythology, and history, correspond with the title. But there are fifty French Ballads, found only in a very valuable MS. in the possession of the duke of Sutherland, and printed in 1818 for the Roxburghe Club, which are undoubtedly the productions of the poet's younger years. They are tender in sentiment and not unrefined with regard to language and form, especially if we consider that they are the work of a foreigner. They treat of love in the manner introduced by the Provençal poets, which was afterwards generally adopted by those in the north of France. A few specimens cannot fail to give a favourable idea of Gower's skill and expression.

## Balade xv.

*" Com lesperver qe vole par creance  
Et de son las ne poet partir envoie,  
De mes amours ensi par resemblance  
Jeo sui liez si que par nulle voie  
Ne puis aler samour ne me convoie,  
Vous manetz, dame, estrait de tiele mue,  
Combien qe vo presence ades ne voie  
Mon coer remanit qe point ne se remue.*

*" Soubtz vo constreainte et soubtz vo governance  
Amour mad dit qe jeo me supple et ploie,  
Sicome foial doit faire a sa ligeance  
Et plus dassetz si faire le porroie,  
Pour ce, ma douce dame, a vous motroie.  
Car a ce point jai fait ma retenue,  
Que si le corps de moi fuist ore a Troie  
Mon coer remanit qe point ne se remue.*

\* Balades and other Poems by John Gower; Roxburghe Club, 1818.



*“ Si come le Mois de May lesprees avance,  
Qest tout flori quant lerbe se verdoie,  
Ensi par vous revient ma contenance  
De vo bealte si penser je le doie,  
Et si merci me volt vestir de joie  
Pour la bounte que vous avetz vestue  
En tiel espoir, ma dame, unques jeo soie  
Mon coer remanit qe point ne se remue.*

*“ A vostre ymage est tout ceo qe jeo proie,  
Quant ceste lettre a vous serra venue,  
Qa vous servir come cil qest vostre proie,  
Mon coer remanit qe point ne se remue.”*

Balade xx.

*“ Sicom la nief, quant le fort vent tempeste,  
Pur halte mier se torna ci et la,  
Ma dame, ensi mon coer manit en tempeste,  
Quant le danger de vo parole orra,  
Le nief qe votre bouche soufflera,  
Me fait figler sur le peril de vie,  
Qest en danger falt qil mera supplie.*

*“ Rois Ulyxes, sicom nos dist la geste,  
Vers son paiis de Troie qui sigla,  
Not tiel paour du peril et moleste,  
Quant les Sereines en la mier passa,  
Et la danger de Circes eschapa,  
Qe le paour nest plus de ma partie,  
Qest en danger falt qil mera supplie.*

*“ Danger qui tolt damour tout la feste,  
Unques un mot de confort ne sona,  
Ainz plus cruel qe nest la fiere beste  
Au point quant danger me respondera.  
La chiere porte et quant le nai dirra,*

*Plusque la mort mestoie celle oie  
 Qest en danger falt qil mera supplie.*

*"Vers vous, ma bone dame, horpris cella,  
 Qe danger manit en votre compainie,  
 Cest balade en mon message irra  
 Qest en danger falt qil mera supplie."*

A few lines are preserved in the same manuscript, in which the poet asks the reader's indulgence for his French:—

*"Al Universite de tout le monde  
 Johan Gower ceste balade envoie,  
 Et si jeo nai de francois la faconde,  
 Pardonetz moi qe jeo de ceo forsoie.  
 Jeo sui Englois si quier par tiele voie  
 Estre excuse mais quoique nulls endie,  
 Lamour parfit en dieu se justifie."*

There are no indications of the dates of his French productions, but that the poet in later days still used this language appears from some French verses addressed to king Henry IV. after his accession, and preserved in the same volume.

Soon after the rebellion of the Commons in 1381, an event which made a great impression on his mind, he wrote that singular work in Latin distichs, called *Vox Clamantis*, of which we possess an excellent edition by the Rev. H. O. Coxe, printed for the Roxburghe Club, in 1850. The name, with an allusion to St. John the Baptist, seems to have been adopted from the general clamour and cry then abroad in the country. The greater bulk of the work, the date of which its editor is inclined to fix between 1382 and 1384 is rather a moral than an historical essay; but the first book describes the insurrection of Wat Tyler in an allegorical disguise; the poet having a dream on the



11th of June 1381, in which men assume the shape of animals. The second book contains a long sermon on fatalism, in which the poet shows himself no friend to Wiclif's tenets, but a zealous advocate for the reformation of the clergy. The third book points out how all orders of society must suffer for their own vices and demerits; in illustration of which he cites the example of the secular clergy. The fourth book is dedicated to the cloistered clergy and the friars, the fifth to the military, the sixth contains a violent attack on the lawyers, and the seventh subjoins the moral of the whole, represented in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, as interpreted by Daniel.

There exist several other small Latin poems, written generally in the medieval (leonine) hexameter, viz :

*Cronica Tripartita*, containing a mere outline of the latter part of Richard II.'s reign and vindicating the accession of Henry IV, printed in the same volume.

Latin verses, addressed to Henry IV. and some others, about the poet's old age and blindness, published from the duke of Sutherland's MSS.

*Carmen de variis in amore passionibus breviter compilatum.*

*Contra Demonis astuciam in causa lollardie*, in MS. Harl. 3869, fol. 362.

In the list of his writings Gower himself assigned the third and last place to his English poem, the *Confessio Amantis*. There is reason to believe that he was induced to compose in his native tongue when he was an old man, by the great success which his friend Chaucer had achieved by his English works. The exact date of the poem has not been ascertained, but there is internal evidence, in certain copies, that it existed in the year 1392-3.

As this point involves a question of grave importance with respect to the author's behaviour and position in the



political events of the day, it will be necessary to enter more fully into the subject. He unquestionably issued two editions of the work, which, however, as will be distinctly seen in the present edition, vary from each other only at the commencement and at the end; the one being dedicated to king Richard II, the other to his cousin Henry of Lancaster, earl of Derby. In the king's copy the poet describes at length, how he came rowing down the Thames at London one day, and how he met king Richard, who, having invited him to step into the royal barge, commanded him to write a book upon some new matter. In that addressed to Henry he says, that the book was finished:—

“*the yere sixtente of king Richard,*”

an important fact, which has been hitherto overlooked by all writers on the subject, including even Sir H. Nicolas,\* who states that Gower did not dedicate his work to Henry until he had ascended the throne. But this date in conjunction with the other fact, that in the *Confessio Amantis* Henry is never called king, nor duke of Hereford, nor duke of Lancaster, but simply Henry of Lancaster, and the circumstance, that in a marginal note occurring in all copies which contain the dedication to him, he is styled *Dominus Henricus de Lancastria, tunc Derby comes* (a title, which he bore in the year 1392-3), entirely prove, that the work, which he had formerly dedicated to the king, was now addressed to the earl. The one version abounds in expressions of the deepest loyalty towards his sovereign, for whose sake he intends to write *some newe thing* in English; the other mentions the year of the reign of king Richard II, is full of attachment to Henry of Lancaster:—

“*with whom my herte is of accorde,*”

and purports to appear in English for England's sake.

\* Life of Chaucer, p. 39.

It is not possible that both dedications could have been written at the same time ; for, if we consider the political situation in those days, only a very abject mind would have made simultaneously two such opposite declarations. Besides it is distinctly stated in one version, which unquestionably is the earlier, that the first idea of the work originated with the king, whereas in the other the poet takes no notice whatever of his having been induced by Richard to write an English work, but merely mentions the year in which he addressed it to earl Henry. It is well known, that Henry as early as the year 1387 had joined the opposition and had been one of the lords appellants, who forced the king to rule according to the will of parliament. Gower, who was a close observer of the political events of his days, saw how the young king, after attaining his majority, attempted in the years 1386 and 1387 in conjunction with his favourite the young duke of Ireland, to annihilate the opposition headed by the duke of Gloucester and the earls of Arundel, Warwick, Nottingham, and Derby. He perceived that the king from disposition and inclination was hurrying himself and the affairs of his realm to ultimate destruction and ruin. He therefore changed his politics early in the reign of Richard II, altered the dedication of his English work in 1392-3, received in the year next following a collar from Henry of Lancaster, and looked upon him ever afterwards as the final restorer of peace and order. From that time he appears to have been a firm adherer to the Lancastrian interest, for the same sentiment which he expressed in the dedication of 1392-3 is found in some Latin and French scraps, addressed to king Henry IV. and mentioned above, and also in an English poem of fifty-five stanzas entitled "a Balade to Kyng Henry the fourth," in which he praises him highly and recommends for his imitation



the examples of former great rulers.\* This is a very simple solution founded on facts and dates, by which the honour of the poet is entirely saved from the injurious accusation that he was "an ingrate to his lawful sovereign, and a sycophant to the usurper of his throne."†

The date, therefore, when Gower began to write the *Confessio Amantis* would fall before the year 1386, and before the young king, who had just become of age, developed those dangerous qualities which estranged from him, amongst others, the poet, who, as he states himself, composed his work in English in consequence of an invitation from his sovereign. The *Confessio Amantis* was certainly complete in the year 1392-3, and was therefore written about the time at which Chaucer was engaged upon the latter part of his immortal work, the *Canterbury Tales*.

We now come to the work itself. It consists of a prologue and eight books, written entirely, with the exception of a poem at the end of the eighth book, in verses of eight syllables, rhyming in pairs.

The prologue confirms what has just been stated with regard to the author's political opinions. Like his contemporaries, *Piers Plowman* and Wiclif, he imagines, that in consequence of the absence of all order and justice, the end of the world is at hand. He accuses the church, especially since the beginning of the great schism between Rome and Avignon which nurtures

" *This newe secte of lollardie,*"

as well as the state and the people in general, of being incurably infected with this universal disease. It is not accident or fortune, he says, which rules the destinies of the world, but God's governance, as revealed in the vision of

\* Chaucer's Works, ed. Thynne, 1532, fol. 375<sup>b</sup>.

† Ritson, *Bibliographia Poetica*, 1802, p. 25.



Nebuchadnezzar, and explained by the prophet Daniel, whose interpretation he next largely comments on, bringing all the historical knowledge at his command to bear upon the subject.

The poem opens by introducing the author himself, in the character of an unhappy lover in despair, smitten by Cupid's arrow. Venus appears to him and, after having heard his prayer, appoints her priest called Genius, like the myſtagogue in the Picture of Cebes, to hear the lover's confession. This is the frame of the whole work, which is a ſingular mixture of claffical notions, principally borrowed from *Ovid's Ars Amandi*, and of the purely mediæval idea, that as a good Catholic the unfortunate lover muſt ſtate his diſtreſs to a father confeſſor. This is done in the courſe of the confeſſion with great regularity and even pedantry: all the paſſions of the human heart, which generally ſtand in the way of love, being ſyſtematically arranged in the various books and ſubdiviſions of the work. After Genius has fully explained the evil affection, paſſion, or vice under conſideration, the lover confeſſes on that particular point; and frequently urges his boundleſs love for an unknown beauty, who treats him cruelly, in a tone of affectation which would appear highly ridiculous in a man of more than ſixty years of age, were it not a common characteristic of the poetry of the period. After this profeſſion, the confeſſor oppoſes him, and exemplifies the fatal effects of each paſſion by a variety of appoſite ſtories, gathered from many ſources, examples being then as now a favourite mode of inculcating inſtruction and reformation. At length, after a frequent and tedious recurrence of the ſame proceſs, the confeſſion is terminated by ſome final injunctions of the prieſt—the lover's petition in a ſtrophic poem addreſſed to Venus—the bitter judgment of the goddeſs,

that he should remember his old age and leave off such fooleries:—

*“ For loves lust and lockes hore  
In chambre accorden never more ”*

—his cure from the wound caused by the dart of love, and his absolution, received as if by a pious Roman Catholic.

The materials for this extensive work, and the stories inserted as examples for and against the lover's passion, are drawn from various sources. Some have been taken from the Bible, a great number from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which must have been a particular favourite with the author, others from the mediæval histories of the siege of Troy, of the feats of Alexander the Great—from the oldest collections of novels, known under the name of the *Gesta Romanorum*, chiefly in its form as used in England—from the *Pantheon* and the *Speculum Regum* of Godfrey of Viterbo—from the romance of Sir Lancelot, and the chronicles of Cassiodorus and Isidorus. We believe that all the stories in the work may be referred with certainty to one or other of these sources, except one tale, perhaps the latest in date, taken from the apocryphal life of Pope Boniface VIII. In the sixth book the confessor enters into a long discourse on the contents of the *Almagest*, he explains the doctrines of the age concerning the vegetable, mineral, and animal stones, and asserts his own belief in the existence of the philosopher's stone. The seventh book contains an exposition of a great portion of Aristotle's philosophy, chiefly his physics, ethics and metaphysics, not taken from the original, but very likely borrowed from the mediæval Pseudo-Aristotelian compendium, known under the name of the *Secretum Secretorum*.

This great amount of knowledge and science, as studied and revered in those days, gives the work the appearance



of a cyclopædia, in which the author was anxious and vain enough to amass whatever he had learnt and extracted from his own library, the contents of which from what has been said before, the reader may easily imagine. The accumulation of such stores, both of narrative and scientific matter, left necessarily very little space for a display of the author's imagination, and for poetic invention. He did not possess the deep love for the beauties of external nature, nor the inimitable humour and diversified natural passion, which we admire in Chaucer. But wanting these essentially poetical attributes, he indulges freely in reasoning and moralizing on the happiness and misfortunes of love, which in former times he may have amply experienced. But however dry his poetic vein, it is not altogether without its charms. The vivacity and variety of his short verses evince a correct ear and a happy power, by the assistance of which he enhances the interest in a tale, and frequently terminates it with satisfaction to the reader.\*

The style in which the *Confessio Amantis* is written, bears strong marks of the author's labour; but he did not succeed in blending together the two principal elements of his mother-tongue so skilfully and harmoniously as Chaucer, whose earliest compositions show a considerable practice in the use of what was then a modern language. As Gower wrote much in French, it is but natural, that there should be in his English a large proportion of Norman-French words; even in the spelling, in which he adheres, if we go back to the more ancient MSS, to the form used by the French writers of his day. Yet the Saxon ingredient in his language is as large as in the works of his great contemporary, and comprises a considerable number of words, which at present are either

\* W. W. Lloyd, in Singer's *Shakespeare*, vol. iv. p. 261.



obsolete, or have altogether changed their meaning. There are very few examples of alliteration and other characteristics of pure Saxonism. Some of his words, the pronunciation of which is frequently regulated by the rhyme, or may perhaps be referred to his provincial dialect, are curious. For instance, instead of *I saw*, he invariably wrote *I sigb*; for *not*, he always wrote *nought*. In many instances, especially where words change their vowels in deference to the preceding rhyme, he sets all rules at defiance, and verbs of the strong conjugation are frequently used indiscriminately in the present or preterite tense without the slightest regard to the sense of the period. His sentences are often diffuse, and ungrammatical; and it was evidently no easy task for him to compose this long poem in English.

( In spite of all these defects the *Confessio Amantis* very soon became a favourite in England. Copies were transcribed for the court, the nobility, and the general reader. ( The work is among the earliest productions of the English press, and retained its admirers until brighter stars made their appearance above the horizon of our national literature.

We have already seen, how Chaucer characterized the style of his brother poet. Even a contemporary chronicler seems to borrow occasionally from the *Confessio Amantis*. The Monk of Evesham, in the Life of Richard II. says of the prelates: "*Dimiserunt oves expositas luporum rictibus, set nullus erexit baculum ad abigendum*,"\* which agrees with Gower's Prologue 2. :

*" For if the wolf come in the way,  
Their gostly staffe is than away,  
Whereof they shuld her flock defende ;"*

\* Ed. Hearne, p. 114.

and again : "Sed domina fortuna, quæ rotam instabilem non finit semper in suo statu permanere, proiecit eum Regem quasi subito a summa usque ad yma,"\* which at least resembles Gower's Prologue 1. :—

*" After the torning of the whele,  
Which blinde fortune overthroweth,  
Wherof the certain no man knoweth."*

Towards the end of the fifteenth century, Skelton dedicated a few lines to Gower, which are not without interest as descriptive of his poetry ; in the Boke of Philip Sparrow, he says :—

*" Gowers englyshe is olde,  
And of no value is tolde ;  
His matter is worth gold,  
And worthy to be enrold,"*

and again in the Crowne of Laurell :—

*" Gower, that first garnished our English rude,  
And maister Chaucer, that nobly enterprised,  
How that Englishe myght freshely be ennewed."*

At last Shakespeare, or whoever wrote or touched with true Shakespearean genius the play of Pericles, Prince of Tyre, took his subject directly from the story of Appollinus of Tyre, as told in the eighth book of the Confessio Amantis, and introduced in the place of Chorus old Gower himself, prologuizing and epiloguizing in his own lively metre. The words by which the drama is opened—

*" To sing a song that old was sung,  
From ashes ancient Gower is come,  
Assuming man's infirmities,  
To glad our ear and please our eyes,"*

\* Ed. Hearne, p. 149.



are a sufficient proof, that at the date of this play, (1596 or 1598,) the name and poem of Gower were familiar to many who went to see the performance of *Pericles*. Gower appears also in the second part of Shakespeare's *King Henry IV.* as one of the king's party, and in the scene with *Falstaff* is evidently treated as a person of considerable importance.

### III.—MANUSCRIPTS AND EDITIONS OF THE *CONFESSIO AMANTIS*.

THE Manuscripts of Gower's English work are very numerous; there are copies at Oxford, at Cambridge, at Dublin, in the British Museum, and in private collections. At the first-mentioned place there are no less than ten, for a short notice of which the editor is indebted to the *Rev. H. O. Coxe*, of the Bodleian Library.

MS. Laud, 609, MS. Bodl. 693, MS. Selden, B. 11. and MS. Corp. Chr. Coll. 67, contain the version addressed to Richard II. with the complimentary verses on Chaucer at the end.

MS. Fairfax, 3, MS. Hatton, 51, MS. Wadham Coll. 13, and MS. New Coll. 266, contain the Lancaster copy.

Besides these there are two hybrids: MS. Bodl. 294, which has the dedication to Richard at the commencement, and omits the verses on Chaucer; and MS. New Coll. 326, which is dedicated to Henry of Lancaster, and compliments Chaucer at the end. The first of these has the same scribe and illuminator throughout; the latter part of the second appears to have been written by a different hand. All these MSS. are of the fifteenth century.

The four copies at Cambridge have been briefly described by Todd, in his *Illustrations of Gower and Chaucer*.



For the present edition the next following MSS. have been used :

MS. Harl. 7184, in the British Museum. It is a very fine copy, written on vellum, in large folio and double columns ; but the first and last pages are somewhat defaced. The illuminations of the initial letters, at the beginning of each book, are magnificent. The handwriting is as nearly as possible that of the end of the fourteenth century. The orthography is of the same date, and very little tinged with provincialisms. The two Saxon letters þ and ȝ never occur. The volume is imperfect. In books I, II, and V, a leaf is occasionally missing, there is a considerable chasm in book VI., and a great part of book VII and the whole of book VIII are entirely wanting. This volume, on account of its antiquity and its judicious and consistent orthography, has been adopted as the basis for the spelling in this new edition.

MS. Harl. 3869 in the British Museum. A small stout folio of the fifteenth century, on vellum and paper mixed. The initials are blue and red without much art. Folio 5 contains a rude picture, representing king Nebuchadnezzar's vision ; and on folio 18 the priest of Venus is listening to the lover's confession. This copy is very remarkable on account of its orthography, which has been carried through almost rigorously according to simple and reasonable principles. The letter þ is used uniformly, but the letter ȝ only occasionally, a simple *h* standing generally for *gh* or ȝ. A final *e* is always inserted, wherever the metre requires a syllable. Double consonants and the letter *y* are almost entirely dispensed with. At the conclusion of the work, on folio 357<sup>b</sup>, Gower's smaller poems in Latin, and some verses in French occur. This volume, as well as MS. Harl. 7184, are exemplars of the Lancaster version ; both have been collated throughout for the text of the present edition.

MS. Harl. 3490 in the British Museum. A fine copy of the version dedicated to king Richard II, written in the fifteenth century, on vellum, in folio and double columns. The volume is complete, and opens with S. Edmundi speculum religiosorum, which is followed by the Confessio Amantis at folio 8. With the exception of the beginning and end it offers no variety, and no important deviation in the spelling. The verses addressed to king Richard, and the compliment to Chaucer printed at the foot of the page in the present edition, have been taken from this manuscript.

MS. Stafford, now in the library of the *earl of Ellesmere*, an inspection of which has been kindly granted by the noble owner. A middle-sized folio in double columns. Todd, in his *Illustrations of Chaucer and Gower*, asserts his belief, that this copy was a present from Gower to one of his relatives belonging to the Stafford family. He saw on the first leaf three armorial shields: over the largest of which, he says, the poet's crest, a talbot, is still conspicuous. After a careful examination it is impossible to agree with this opinion; we have come to the conclusion, that the volume is of still greater value. On the right hand border is a crest, gold and red, a chapecau with a lion, which Todd calls a talbot, and under it an escutcheon quartered blue and red, the contents of which are entirely defaced. The first initial letter embraces another escutcheon, red on a blue ribbon, containing a swan, Argent. Suspended at the bottom of the border is a third shield, Sable, with three ostrich feathers, Or. *Sir Charles Young, Garter King of Arms*, is of opinion that these illuminations represent the arms and badges of king Henry IV, the swan never having been used by any other king of the Lancaster dynasty. The volume most probably belonged to that prince, and was written between



the years 1399 and 1413. The capitals at the beginning of each book are richly gilt and painted in blue, red, and white, but not of very finished workmanship. The handwriting is clear and pointed, like that of the middle of the fifteenth century, and resembles the characters found in the first printed books. This MS. which is a copy of the Lancaster version, is remarkable on account of certain considerable alterations, omissions, and additions, especially in the latter part of the fifth and in the sixth and seventh books, which are not met with in the majority of the more ancient copies, but which are found in Berthelette's editions of the poem. As our text is compiled from the older MSS. these variations have been carefully indicated, and no passage has been omitted. This manuscript moreover is not complete, the beginnings of the first, fifth, seventh and eighth book, having been cut out, probably for the sake of the illuminated pages. On the fly-leaves at the end are several memoranda in different handwritings of the sixteenth century; mostly receipts against various diseases. One of them states: "William Downes mee tenet," which suggests that the book at that time was neither in royal hands nor the property of the Gower family. The orthography approaches closely that of MS. Harl. 3869, the letters þ and ȝ being employed throughout the volume.

These MSS. may be arranged in three classes; the king's copy, the Lancaster copy, and a third, likewise addressed to Henry, but with certain alterations in the middle of the work. With the exception of these variations, the text in all the MSS. is alike.

The *Confessio Amantis* was first printed by Caxton and with the following title:—

This book is entituled *Confessio Amantis*, that is to saye in englyshe the confessyon of the louver maad and compyled by Johan Gower squyer borne in Walys in



the tyme of kyng richard the second, etc. Colophon: Enprynted at Westmestre, by me Willyam Caxton, and fynysshed the 2 day of Septembre the fyrst yere of the regne of kyng Richard the thyrde the yere of our lord a thousand cccc, lxxxxiii. (mistake for 1483). Six leaves are appropriated to a table of contents; the text commences on fol. 2, and is continued to fol. 211, leaves 32, 91 and 132 being repeated, and leaf 157 being omitted altogether. At the end the summary of the poet's three great works and a few of his minor Latin poems are added.

The next edition, printed by Berthelette, was entitled *Jo. Gower, de Confessione Amantis*. Imprinted at London, in Flete-frete by Thomas Berthelette, printer to the kinges grace, An. M. D. xxxii. cum privilegio. Eight preliminary leaves contain the title, a dedication to Henry VIII, an address "To the Reder" on the variations at the beginning and end of the poem, a dedication to king Richard II, the verses about Chaucer, a notice of Gower's tomb in St. Mary Overy's, and a corrected table of contents. The text extends from fol. 1 to fol. 191. Besides the alterations in the fifth, sixth, and seventh books, derived from a MS. very similar to the Stafford MS, the spelling has been considerably altered and modernised in this first edition of Berthelette. Old forms, retained by Caxton, as *hem* and *touchend*, have been removed, and *them* and *touching* substituted. The modernisation has been general at the commencement, but the editor's zeal seems to have slackened afterwards, and many ancient forms have escaped his eye. The promiscuous use of the letters *u* and *v*, *i* and *y*, for which no rule whatever can be discovered, occurs throughout, as in many books of Henry VIII's time; and a want of correspondence in the rhyme indicates that whole verses have been omitted.

Berthelette published another edition under the following title: *Jo. Gower de confessione Amantis*. Imprinted at London in Fleteftrete by Thomas Berthelette the xii daie of Marche An. M. D. LIIII. cum privilegio. Six preliminary leaves have the same contents as in his first edition. The text extends from fol. 1 to fol. 191. In this copy the compliment paid to Chaucer is inserted in the text. The spelling is now and then even more modernised than in his first edition, and punctuation, which is wanting altogether in Caxton's edition, and rarely and irregularly inserted in the edition of 1532, has been added throughout.

Blore, in his *Sepulchral Antiquities*, quoted above, and Chalmers, in his *English Poets*, mention another edition by Berthelette, dated 1544, of which, however, there is no copy in the collections of the British Museum.

The text of the *Confessio Amantis* in Chalmers' *English Poets*, is a mere literal reprint of Berthelette's edition of 1554.

Some fragments of the *Confessio Amantis* have occasionally been published. Ellis, in his *Specimens of Early English Poets*, has printed the story of Florent from the first book. Todd, in his *Illustrations of Chaucer and Gower* has collated the Tale of the Coffres in the fifth book with the Stafford MS. as illustrating the story of the caskets in the Merchant of Venice. And Payne Collier has printed in his *Shakespeare Library* the story of Appollinus of Tyre from the eighth book, according to MS. Harl. 3490.

The present text, founded on Berthelette's first edition, has been carefully collated throughout with the two first mentioned Harleian MSS. in the British Museum. And the third MS. Harl. and MS. Stafford have been used at the particular places, where they become of im-



portance. The chief labour, however, consisted in restoring the orthography and in regulating the metre, both of which had been disturbed in innumerable places by Berthelette. The text of a work like the *Confessio Amantis* does not require the same scrupulous attention to every existing MS. as that of an ancient classical author. Everybody who examines the MSS. of Gower will soon be satisfied that the principal differences are merely of an orthographical nature. Some spell the word *eye* as we do now, others have *ighe, i3e, yhe*. After mature consideration, the Saxon letters þ and 3 have been rejected, together with the promiscuous use of *y* and *i*, *u* and *v*, which does not occur in the oldest MSS. It has been found necessary that some rule and symmetry should be observed, and consequently *i* and *u* are used wherever the vowels are required, and *y* has been left for certain words and proper names, in which it invariably occurs in Latin MSS. of the same age; as for instance in *ymage*, and for a distinct class of words as *ayein, yive*, where it stands instead of the soft *g*, the Saxon ȝ ȝ, and is confirmed by the oldest of the Harleian MSS. *U* instead of *v* has been retained only in *pouer* and *recouer*, where it evidently is not a consonant, but forms a diphthong with the preceding *o*, the word being pronounced in two syllables and not like the present *poor*. In other cases, and with regard to words of French origin, it has been thought best to use the old orthography.

The Latin verses and the marginal Latin index are undoubtedly Gower's own composition, and have therefore been carefully restored to the shape in which they appear in the first two Harleian MSS. The verses, imitations in the manner of Boethius, like Gower's other Latin poetry, abound in instances of false prosody and even of bad grammar; they are frequently intricate, and



sometimes nearly unintelligible. As they always head a new sub-division, it has been thought useful for the sake of quotation to number them through each book. The Latin prose notes, which in the old editions stand between and interrupt the text, have been placed in the margin, where they generally occur in the MSS. serving as a table of contents.

The editor desires to embrace this opportunity to thank his friends *Th. Duffus Hardy, Esq.*, keeper of H. M. Records in the Tower, the *Rev. H. O. Coxe, M.A.* of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and *W. B. Donne, Esq.*, of the London Library, for their kind and ready assistance, and *Mr. F. R. Daldy, B.A.* for the useful Glossary which he has added.

London, May 1856.







# CONFESSIO AMANTIS







## Prologus.

*Torpor hebes sensus, scola parva labor minimusque  
Causant, quo minimus ipse minora canam,  
Qua tamen Eugisti lingua canit insula Bruti  
Anglica carmen te metra iuvante loquar.  
Ossibus ergo carens qui conterit ossa loquelis  
Absit et interpres stet procul oro malus.*



F hem, that writen us to-fore,  
The bokesdwelle, and we ther-  
fore  
Ben taught of that was writen  
tho.

Forthy good is, that we also  
In oure time amonge us here  
Do write of newe some matere  
Ensampled of the olde wise,  
So that it might in suche a wise,  
Whan we be dede and elles where,  
Beleve to the worldes ere  
In time comend after this.  
But for men fain, and sothe it is,  
That who that al of wisdom writ  
It dulleth ofte a mannes wit



2 CONFESSIO AMANTIS.

To hem that shall it alday rede,  
For thilke cause if that ye rede  
I wolde go the middel wey  
And write a boke betwene the twey  
Somwhat of lust, somewhat of lore,  
That of the lasse or of the more  
Som man may like of that I write,  
And for that fewe men endite

In oure englishe, I thenke make\*  
A boke for Englondes fake

Hic in principio libri declarat, qualiter in anno Regis

\* MS. Harl. 3490 :

In our englishe I thenke make  
A boke for king Richardes fake,  
To whom belongeth my legeaunce  
With all min hertes obeisaunce,  
In all that ever a lege man  
Unto his king may done or can,  
So ferforth and me recommaunde  
To him, which all me may commaunde,  
Preiend unto the highe regne,  
Which causeth every king to regne,  
That his corone longe stonde.

I thenke and have it understonde,  
As it befell upon a tide,  
As thing, which shulde tho betide,  
Under the town of newe Troy,  
Which toke of Brute his firste joy,  
In Themse, whan it was flowend,  
As I by bote came rowend  
So as fortune her time sette,  
My lege lord perchaunce I mette.  
And so befell as I came nigh  
Out of my bote, whan he me sigh,  
He bad me come into his barge.  
And whan I was with him at large,

Hic declarat in primis, qualiter ob reverentiam serenissimi principis Domini sui Regis Anglie Ricardi secundi totus suus humilis Johannes Gower, licet quam infirmitate a diu multipliciter fatigatus huius opusculi labores suscipere non recusavit, sed tanquam favum ex variis floribus collectum presentem libellum ex variis chronicis historicis poetarum philosophorum

PROLOGUS.

3

The yere fixtenthe of king Richard,  
What shall befall here afterward,  
God wote, for nowe upon this side  
Men seen the worlde on every side  
In sondry wise so diuersed,  
That it wel nigh stant all reversed.  
As for to speke of time ago  
The cause why it chaungeth so  
It nedeth nought to specifie,  
The thing so open is at eye,

Ricardi secundi  
sextodecimo Jo-  
hannes Gower pre-  
sentem libellum  
composuit et fina-  
liter complevit,  
quem strenuissimo  
domino suo Domi-  
no Henrico de Lan-  
castria tunc Derby  
Comiti cum omni  
reverencia speciali-  
ter destinavit.

Amonges other thinges said  
He hath this charge upon me laid  
And bad me do my besynesse,  
That to his highe worthynesse  
Some newe thing I shulde boke,  
That he him self it mighte loke  
After the forme of my writing.  
And thus upon his commaunding  
Min herte is well the more glad  
To write so as he me bad.  
And eke my fere is well the lasse,  
That none envie shall compasse  
Without a resonable wite  
To feigne and blame, that I write.  
A gentil herte his tunge stilleth,  
That it malice none distilleth  
But preise, that is to be preised.  
But he that hath his worde unpeised  
And handleth out wrong any thing,  
I pray unto the heven king  
Fro suche tungen he me shilde.  
And netheles this world is wilde  
Of suche jangling and what befall,  
My kinges hefte shall nought falle,  
That I in hope to deserve

que dictis, quatenus  
infirmis permisit,  
studiosissime compli-  
avit.

That every man it may beholde.  
 And netheles by daies olde,  
 Whan that the bokes weren lever,  
 Writinge was beloved ever  
 Of hem, that weren vertuous.  
 For here in erthe amanges us,  
 If no man write, howe it stood,  
 The pris of hem that were good  
 Shulde, as who faith a great partie,  
 Be lost, so for to magnifie  
 The worthy princes that tho were  
 The bokes shewen here and there  
 Wherof the worlde ensampled is  
 And tho that diden than amis

---

His thank ne shall his will observe  
 And elles were I nought excused.

For that thing may nought be refused,  
 What that a king him selfe bit.  
 Forthy the simpleffe of my wit  
 I thenke if that I may availe  
 In his service to travaile,  
 Though I fikenesse have upon honde  
 And longe have had, yet woll I fonde,  
 So as I made my beheste,  
 To make a boke after his heste  
 And write in such a maner wise,  
 Which may be wisdome to the wise  
 And play to hem that list to play.  
 But in proverbe I have herde say,  
 That who that wel his werk beginneth,  
 The rather a good end he winneth.

And thus the prologue of my boke  
 After the world, that whilom toke,  
 And eke somdele after the newe,  
 I woll beginne for to newe.



Through tiranny and cruelte,  
Right as they stonden in degre  
So was the writinge of here werke.  
Thus I which am a borel clerke  
Purpofe for to write a boke  
After the worlde, that whilom toke  
Long time in olde daies paffed.  
But for men fain it is now laffed  
In worfe plight than it was tho  
I thenke for to touche alfo  
The world, which neweth every day,  
So as I can, fo as I may.  
Though I likenesse have upon honde  
And longe have had, yet wol I fonde  
To write and do my besinesse,  
That in some part fo as I gesse  
The wise man may ben advised.  
For this prologue is fo affised,  
That it to wifdome all belongeth,  
That wise man that it underfongeth  
He fhall drawe into remembraunce  
The fortune of this worldes chaunce,  
The which no man in his perfone  
May knowe but the god alone.  
Whan the prologue is fo dispended,  
This boke fhall afterward ben ended  
Of love, which doth many a wonder  
And many a wise man hath put under,  
And in this wif I thenke to treat  
Towardes hem, that now be grete,

6      *CONFESSIO AMANTIS.*

Betwene the vertue and the vice,  
Which longeth unto this office.  
But for my wittes ben to smale  
To tellen every man his tale,  
This boke upon amendement  
To stonde at his commaundement,  
With whom min herte is of accorde,  
I sende unto min owne lorde,  
Which of Lancastre is Henry named.  
The highe god him hath proclamed  
Full of knighthod and alle grace,  
So wol I now this werke embrace  
With hol truste and with hol beleve,  
God graunte I mote it well acheve.

2.      *Tempus preteritum presens fortuna beatum  
Linqvit, et antiquas vertit in orbe vias.  
Progenit veterem concors dilectio pacem,  
Dum facies hominis nuncia mentis erat.  
Legibus unicolor tunc temporis aura refulsit,  
Iusticie plane tuncque fuere vie.  
Nuncque latens odium vultum depingit amoris,  
Paceque sub ficta tempus ad arma tegit.  
Instar et ex variis mutabile cameliontis  
Lex gerit, et regnis sunt nova jura novis.  
Climataque fuerant solidissima, sicque per orbem  
Solvuntur, nec eo centra quietis habent.*

De statu regno-  
rum ut dicunt se-  
cundum tempora-  
lia, videlicet tem-  
pore regis Ricardi  
secundi, anno reg-  
ni sui sextodecimo.

If I shall drawe into my minde  
The time passed, than I finde  
The world stode in al his welthe,  
Tho was the life of man in helthe,  
Tho was plente, tho was richesse,  
Tho was the fortune of prowesse,  
Tho was knighthode in pris by name,  
Wherof the wide worldes fame

Write in croniques is yet witholde.  
Justice of lawe tho was holde,  
The privelege of regalie  
Was sauf, and all the baronie  
Worshiped was in his estate.  
The citees knewen no debate,  
The people stode in obeisaunce  
Under the reule of governaunce,  
And pees with rightwisnesse keste,  
With charite tho stode in reste,  
Of mannes herte the corage  
Was shewed than in the visage.  
The word was liche to the conceipt  
Withoute semblaunt of decepte,  
Tho was there unenvied love,  
Tho was vertue set above,  
And vice was put under fote.  
Now stant the crope under the rote,  
The worlde is chaunged overall,  
And therof moste in speciall  
That love is falle into discorde.  
And that I take to recorde  
Of every lond for his partie  
The comun vois, which may nought lie,  
Nought upon one, but upon alle  
It is that men now clepe and calle  
And fain, that regnes ben devided,  
In stede of love is hate guided,  
The werre wol no pees purchase,  
And lawe hath take her double face,



So that iustice out of the wey  
 With rightwifnesse is gone away.  
 And thus to loke on every halve  
 Men sene the sore without salve,  
 Whiche al the worlde hath overtake.  
 Ther is no regne of alle out take,  
 For every climat hath his dele  
 After the torninge of the whele,  
 Which blinde fortune overthroweth,  
 Wherof the certain no man knoweth.  
 The heven wot what is to done.  
 But we that dwelle under the mone  
 Stonde in this worlde upon a were,  
 And namely but the power  
 Of hem, that ben the worldes guides,  
 With good counseil on alle sides  
 Be kept upright in suche a wise,  
 That hate breke nought thassise  
 Of love, whiche is all the chese  
 To kepe a regne out of mischese.  
 For alle reson wolde this,

Apostolus. Re-  
 gem honorificate.

That unto him, which the heved is,  
 The membres buxom shall bowe,  
 And he shulde eke here trouth alowe  
 With all his hert and make hem chere.

Salomon. Omnia  
 fac cum consilio.

For good counseil is good to here,  
 All though a man be wise him selve,  
 Yet is the wisdome more of twelve.  
 And if they stonden both in one,  
 To hope it were than anone,

That god his grace wolde fende  
To make of thilke werre an ende,  
Whiche every day now groweth newe.  
And that is gretely for to rewe  
In speciall for Cristes sake,  
Which wolde his owne life forsake  
Amonge the men to yeven pees.  
But now men tellen netheles,  
That love is fro the world departed,  
So stant the pees uneven parted  
With hem that liven now a daies.  
But for to loke at all affaies  
To him, that wolde reson seche  
After the comun worldes speche,  
It is to wonder of thilke werre,  
In which none wote who hath the werre.  
For every lond him self deceiveth  
And of disese his parte receiveth,  
And yet ne take men no kepe.  
But thilke lorde, whiche al may kepe,  
To whom no counseil may be hid  
Upon the world, whiche is betid,  
Amende that, wherof men pleine  
With trewe hertes and with pleine,  
And reconcile love ayeine  
As he, whiche is king soveraine  
Of all the worldes governaunce,  
And of his highe purveiance  
Afferme pees bitwene the londes  
And take here cause into his hondes,

So that the world may stande appefed  
And his godhede also be plesed.

3. *Quas coluit. Moses vetus, aut novus ipse Joannes,  
Hesternas leges vix colit ista dies.  
Sic prius Ecclesia bina virtute polita  
Nunc magis inculta pallet utraque via.  
Pacificam Petri vaginam mucro resumens  
Horruit ad Christi verba cruoris iter.  
Nunc tamen assiduo gladium de sanguine tinctum  
Vibrat avaricia lege repente sacra.  
Sic lupus est pastor, pater hostis, mors miserator,  
Prædoque largitor, pax et in orbe timor.*

De statu cleri ut  
dicunt secundum  
spiritualia, vide-  
licet tempore Ro-  
berti Gibbonensis,  
qui nomen Cle-  
mentis sibi fortitus  
est tunc Antipape.

To thenke upon the daies olde  
The life of clerkes to beholde  
Men saine, how that they were tho  
Ensampler and reule of alle tho,  
Which of wisdom the vertue soughten.  
Unto the god first they besoughten  
As to the substaunce of here scole,  
That they ne sholden nought befole  
Her witte upon none erthly werkes,  
Whiche were ayein thestate of clerkes,  
And that they mighten fle the vice,  
Which Simon hath in his office,  
Wherof he taketh the golde in honde.  
For thilke time I understonde  
The Lumbarde made non eschaunge  
The bisshopriches for to chaunge,  
Ne yet a letter for to fende  
For dignite ne for provende  
Or cured or withoute cure,  
The chirche keie in adventure



Of armes and of brigantaille  
Stood no thing than upon bataille  
To fight or for to make cheste  
It thought hem thanne nought honeste.  
But of simplefce and pacience  
They maden thanne no defence.  
The courte of worldly regalie  
To hem was thanne no bailie.  
The vein honour was nought desired,  
Which hath the proude herte fired.  
Humilite was tho witholde  
And pride was a vice holde.  
Of holy chirche the largeffe  
Yaf thanne and did great almesse  
To pouer men that hadden nede.  
They were eke chaft in word and dede,  
Wherof the people ensample toke.  
Their lust was al upon the boke  
Or for to preche or for to preie  
To wisse men the righte weie  
Of such as stode of trouth unlered.  
Lo, thus was Peters barge stered  
Of hem that thilke time were.  
And thus came first to mannes ere  
The feith of Criste and alle good  
Through hem, that thanne weren good  
And sobre and chaste and large and wise.  
And now men fain is other wise.  
Simon the cause hath undertake,  
The worldes swerde on hond is take,

And that is wonder netheles,  
 Whan Criste him self hath bode pees  
 And set it in his testament.  
 How now that holy chirche is went  
 Of that here lawe posifife  
 Hath set to make werre and strife  
 For worldes good, which may nought last.  
 God wote the cause to the last  
 Of every right and wronge also.  
 But while the lawe is reuled so  
 That clerkes to the werre entende,  
 I not how that they sholde amende  
 The woful worlde in other thinges  
 To make pees between the kinges  
 After the lawe of charite,  
 Which is the propre duete  
 Belongend unto the presthode.  
 But as it thenketh to make manhode,  
 The heven is fer, the worlde is nigh,  
 And veingloire is eke to fligh,  
 Which covetise hath now witholde,  
 That they none other thing beholde,  
 But only that they mighten winne.  
 And thus the werres they beginne,  
 Wherof the holy chirche is taxed,  
 That in the point as it is axed  
 The disme goth to the bataile,  
 As though Crist mighte nought availe  
 To don hem right by other weie.  
 Into the sward the chirche keie

Is torned, and the holy bede  
Into curfinge, and every stede  
Whiche sholde stonde upon the feith  
And to this cause an ere leith  
Astoned is of the quarele.  
That sholde be the worldes hele  
Is now men sain the pestilence,  
Which hath exiled pacience  
Fro the clergie in speciall.  
And that is shewed overall,  
In any thing whan they be greved.  
But if Gregoire be beleved  
As it is in the bokes write,  
He dothe us somdele for to wite  
The cause of thilke prelatie,  
Where god is nought of compaignie.  
For every werke as it is founded  
Shall stonde, or elles be confounded.  
Who that only for Cristes sake  
Desireth cure for to take  
And nought for pride of thilke estate  
To beare a name of a prelate,  
He shal by reson do profite  
In holy chirche upon the plite,  
That he hath set his conscience  
But in the worldes reverence.  
Ther ben of fuche many glade,  
Whan they to thilke estate ben made  
Nought for the merite of the charge,  
But for they wolde hem self discharge



Of pouerte and become grete,  
And thus for pompe and for beyete  
The scribe and eke the pharisee  
Of Moises upon the see  
In the chaire on high ben set,  
Wherof the feith is ofte let,  
Whiche is betaken hem to kepe.  
In Cristes cause all day they slepe,  
But of the worlde is nought foryete.  
For wel is him, that now may gete  
Office in court to be honoured.  
The stronge cofre hath al deuoured  
Under the keie of avarice  
The trefor of the benefice,  
Wherof the pouer shulden clothe  
And ete and drinke and house bothe.  
The charite goth all unknowe,  
For they no greine of pite sowe,  
And slouthe kepeth the librarie,  
Which longeth to the seintuarie.  
To studie upon the worldes lore  
Sufficeth now withoute more.  
Delicacie his swete tothe  
Hath soffred so that it fordothe  
Of abstinence al that ther is.  
And for to loken over this,  
If Ethna brenne in the clergie,  
Al openly to mannes eye  
At Avinon the experience  
Therof hath yove an evidence

Of that men seen hem so devided.  
And yet the cause is nought decided,  
But it is faide and ever shall :  
Bitwen two stoles is the fall,  
Whan that men wenen best to fitte.  
In holy chirche of fuche a flitte  
Is for to rewe unto us alle.  
God graunte it mote wel befalle  
Towardes him, which hath the trouth.  
But ofte is seen, that mochel slouth,  
Whan men ben drunken of the cuppe,  
Doth mochel harme, whan fire is uppe,  
But if somwho the flamme staunche  
And so to speke upon this braunche,  
Which proud envie hath made to springe  
Of scisme, causeth for to bringe  
This newe secte of lollardie  
And also many an heresie  
Among the clerkes in hem selve.  
It were better dike and delve  
And stonde upon the right feith  
Than knowe al that the bible saith  
And erre as some clerkes do.  
Upon the hond to were a sho  
And set upon the foot a glove  
Accordeth nought to the behove  
Of resonable mannes use.  
If men behelden the vertuse,  
That Criste in erthe taught here,  
They shulden nought in such manere

Among hem, that ben holden wise,  
The papacie so desguise  
Upon divers election,  
Whiche stant after thaffection  
Of sondry londes al aboute.  
But whan god wol, it shal were oute,  
For trouth mot stonde ate laste.  
But yet they argumenten faste  
Upon the pope and his estate,  
Wherof they fallen in great debate.  
This clerk saith ye, that other nay,  
And thus they drive forth the day,  
And eche of hem him self amendeth  
Of worldes good, but none entendeth  
To that, which comun profite were.  
They sain, that god is mighty there  
And shal ordeine, what he wille,  
There make they none other skille,  
Where is the perill of the feith.  
But every clerke his herte leith  
To kepe his worlde in speciall  
And of the cause generall,  
Whiche unto holy chirche longeth,  
Is none of hem that underfongeth  
To shapen any resistence.  
And thus the right hath no defence,  
But there I love, there I holde.  
Lo, thus to-broke is Cristes folde,  
Wherof the flock withoute guide  
Devoured is on every side



In lacke of hem, that ben unware  
Shepherdes, which here wit beware  
Upon the worlde in other halve.  
The sharpe pricke in stede of salve  
They usen now, wherof the hele  
They hurte of that they shulden hele.  
And what sheep, that is full of wulle  
Upon his backe, they toose and pulle,  
While ther is any thinge to pile.  
And though there be none other skile  
But onely for they wolde winne  
They leve nought, whan they beginne  
Upon here acte to procede,  
Whiche is no good shepherdes dede.  
And upon this also men sain  
That fro the leese, whiche is pleine,  
Into the breres they forcacche  
Here orf, for that they wolden lacche  
With such duresse and so bereve  
That shal upon the thornes leve  
Of wulle, whiche the brere hath tore,  
Wherof the sheep ben al to-tore,  
Of that the herdes make hem lese.  
Lo, how they feignen chalk for chese,  
For though they speke and teche wel,  
They don hem self therof no dele.  
For if the wolf come in the wey,  
Their gostly staf is then away,  
Wherof they shulde her flock defende.  
But if the pouer sheep offende

In any thing, though it be lite,  
 They ben al redy for to smite,  
 And thus howe ever that they tale  
 The strokes falle upon the smale,  
 And upon other that bene greate  
 Hem lacketh herte for to beate,  
 So that under the clerkes lawe  
 Men seen the merel al misdrawe.  
 I wol nought say in generall,  
 For there ben somme in speciall,  
 In whome that al vertue dwelleth,  
 And tho ben, as thapostel telleth,  
 That god of his election  
 Hath cleped to perfection  
 In the maner as Aaron was.  
 They be nothings in thilke cas  
 Of Simon, which the foldes gate  
 Hath lete and goth in other gate,  
 But they gone in the righte weie.

*Qui vocantur a deo  
 tanquam Aaron.*

There bene also somme as men saie,  
 That folwen Simon ate heles  
 Whose carte goth upon wheles  
 Of covetise and worldes pride,  
 And holy chirche goth beside,  
 Whiche sheweth outwarde a visage  
 Of that is nought in the corage.  
 For if men loke in holy chirche  
 Betwene the worde and that they wirche,  
 There is a ful great difference.  
 They prechen us in audience,

That noman shall his soule empeire,  
For al is but a chery feire  
This worldes good, so as they telle.  
Also they sain there is an helle,  
Whiche unto mannes sinne is due,  
And bidden us therfore escheue  
That wicked is and do the good.  
Who that her wordes understood  
It thinketh they wolden do the same.  
But yet betwene earnest and game  
Ful oft it torneth other wise.  
With holy tales they devise,  
How meritory is thilke dede  
Of charite to clothe and fede  
The pouer folke and for to parte  
The worldes good, but they departe  
Ne thenken nought fro that they have.  
Also they sain good is to save  
With penaunce and with abstinence  
Of chastite the continence.  
But plainly for to speke of that  
I not how thilke body fat,  
Which they with deinte metes kepe  
And lein it softe for to slepe,  
Whan it hath elles of his wille,  
With chastite shall stonde stille.  
And netheles I can nought say  
In aunter if that I missay  
Touchend of this, how ever it stonde,  
I here and wol nought understonde



For therof have I nought to done.  
 But he that made first the mone,  
 The highe god of his goodnesse,  
 If ther be cause, he it redresse.  
 But what as any man can accuse,  
 This may reson of trouthe excuse.  
 The vice of hem that ben ungood  
 Is no reproef unto the good.  
 For every man his owne werkes  
 Shall beare, and thus as of the clerkes  
 The good men ben to commende,  
 And all these other god amende,  
 For they ben to the worldes eye  
 The mirrour of ensamplarie  
 To reulen and to taken hede  
 Betwene the men and the godhede

4. *Vulgaris populus regali lege subactus  
 Dum jacet, ut mitis equa subibit onus.  
 Si caput extollat et lex sua frena relaxet,  
 Ut sibi velle jubet, tygridis instar habet.  
 Ignis, aqua dominans duo sunt pietate carentes,  
 Ira tamen plebis est violenta magis.*

De statu plebis ut  
 dicunt secundum  
 accidentia mutabi-  
 lis.

Now for to speke of the comune  
 It is to drede of that fortune,  
 Whiche hath befall in sondry londes.  
 But often for defaute of bondes  
 Al sodeinlich er it be wist  
 A tonne, whan his lie arist,  
 To-breketh and renneth al aboute,  
 Whiche elles sholde nought gone oute.  
 And eke ful ofte a litel scar  
 Upon a banke, er men be ware,

Let in the streame, which with gret paine  
 If ever man it shal restreigne.  
 Where lawe lacketh errour groweth,  
 He is nought wise who that ne troweth,  
 For it hath proved oft er this,  
 And thus the comun clamour is  
 In every lond where people dwelleth  
 And eche in his compleinte telleth,  
 How that the worlde is al miswent.  
 And therupon his argument  
 Yeveth every man in sondry wise.  
 But what man wolde him self avise  
 His conscience and nought misuse,  
 He may well at the first excuse  
 His god, whiche ever stant in one,  
 In him there is defaute none.  
 So must it stonde upon us selve,  
 Nought only upon ten ne twelve,  
 But plenerlich upon us alle,  
 For man is cause of that shal falle.

And netheles yet som men write  
 And sain fortune is to wite,  
 And som men holde opinion  
 That it is constellacion,  
 Which causeth al that a man dothe.  
 God wot of bothe whiche is sothe.  
 The worlde as of his propre kinde  
 Was ever untrew and as the blinde  
 Improperlich he demeth fame,  
 He blameth that is nought to blame

Nota contra hoc,  
 quod aliqui sortem  
 fortune, aliqui influ-  
 enciam planetarum  
 ponunt, per quod ut  
 dicitur rerum eventus  
 necessario contingit,  
 sed potius dicendum  
 est, quod ea que nos  
 prospera et adversa in  
 hoc mundo vocamus  
 secundum merita et  
 demerita hominum,  
 digno dei iudicio pro-  
 veniunt.

And preifeth that is nought to preife.  
 Thus whan he fhall the thinges peife,  
 Ther is deceipte in his balaunce  
 And al is that the variaunce  
 Of us, that fhulde us better awife.  
 For after that we fall and rife  
 The worlde arifte and falleth with al,  
 So that the man is over al  
 His owne caufe of wele and wo.  
 That we fortune clepe fo  
 Out of the man him felfe it groweth,  
 And who that other wife troweth  
 Beholde the people of Ifrael.  
 For ever while they deden wel  
 Fortune was hem debonaire,  
 And whan they deden the contraire  
 Fortune was contrariende.  
 So that it proveth wel at ende,  
 Why that the worlde is wonderful  
 And may no while ftonde ful,  
 Though that it feme wel befein,  
 For every worldes thinge is vein  
 And ever goth the whele aboute  
 And ever ftant a man in doute,  
 Fortune ftant no while ftille.  
 So hath ther no man al his wille,  
 Als far as ever a man may knowe  
 There lafteth no thing but a throwe.  
 The world ftant ever upon debate,  
 So may be fiker none eftate,

Boetius.  
 O, quam dulcedo  
 humane vite multa  
 amaritudine asper-  
 fa eft.



Now here now there now to now fro  
 Now up now down the world goth so  
 And ever hath done and ever shal,  
 Wherof I finde in ſpecial  
 A tale written in the bible,  
 Which muſt nedes be credible,  
 And that as in concluſion  
 Saith, that upon diuiſion  
 Stant, why no worldes thing may laſte,  
 Til it be drive to the laſte,  
 And fro the firſte regne of all  
 Unto this day how ſo befall  
 Of that the regnes be mevable,  
 The man him ſelf hath be coupable,  
 Whiche of his propre governaunce  
 Fortuneth al the worldes chaunce.

*Proſper et adverſus obliquo tramite verſus  
 Immundus mundus decipit omne genus.  
 Mundus in eventu verſatur ut alea caſu,  
 Quam celer in ludis jaëtat avara manus.  
 Sicut ymago viri variantur tempora mundi,  
 Statque nihil firmum præter amare deum.*

5.

The high almighty purveiaunce,  
 In whoſe eterne remembraunce  
 From firſt was every thing preſent,  
 He hath his prophecie ſent  
 In ſuche a wiſe, as thou ſhalt here,  
 To Daniel of this matere,  
 How that this world ſhal torne and wende  
 Till it be falle unto his ende,  
 Wherof the tale tell I ſhal  
 In which it is betokened al.

Hic in prologo tractat  
 de ſtatua illa, quam  
 rex Nabugodonosor  
 viderat in ſompnis,  
 cuius caput aureum,  
 peçtus argenteum,  
 venter eneus, tibie  
 ferree, pedum vero  
 quedam pars ferrea,  
 quedam fictilis vide-  
 batur, ſub qua mem-  
 brorum diverſitate ſe-  
 cundum Danielis ex-  
 poſicionem huius  
 mundi variacio figu-  
 rabatur.

As Nabugodonosor slepte  
 A sweven him toke, the whiche he kepte  
 Til on the morwe he was arise,  
 For he therof was sore agrise.  
 Til Daniel his dreame he tolde  
 And praid him faire, that he wolde  
 Arede what it token may  
 And faide : a bedde where I lay  
 Me thought I figh upon a stage,  
 Where stood a wonder straunge ymage.  
 His hed with al the necke also  
 They were of fine gold, bothe two  
 His brest, his sholders and his armes  
 Were al of silver, but tharmes,  
 The wombe and al down to the kne  
 Of bras they were upon to fe,  
 His legges were al made of steel,  
 So were his feet also somdele,  
 And somdele part to hem was take  
 Of erthe, which men pottes make.  
 The feble meind was with the strong,  
 So might it nought wel stonde long.

Hic narrat ulterius  
 de quodam lapide  
 grandi, qui ut in  
 dicto sompno vide-  
 batur ab excelso  
 monte super sta-  
 tuam corruens ip-  
 sam quasi in nichilum  
 penitus contrivit.

And tho me thought, that I figh  
 A great stone from an hill on high  
 Fell down of sodein aventure  
 Upon the feet of this figure,  
 With which stone al to-broke was  
 Gold, silver, erthe, steel and bras,  
 That al was into poulder brought  
 And so forth torned into nought.

This was the sweven which he had,  
That Daniel anone arad  
And saide him: that figure straunge  
Betokeneth how the world shal chaunge  
And waxe lasse worth and lasse,  
Til it to nought all over passe.  
The necke and hed, that weren golde,  
He saide how that betoken sholde  
A worthy worlde, a noble, a riche  
To which none after shal be liche.

Of silver that was over forthe  
Shal ben a worlde of lasse worthe.

And after that the wombe of bras  
Token of a wers worlde it was.  
The steel which he sigh afterward  
A world betokeneth more hard.

But yet the werste of every dele  
Is last, that whan of erth and steel  
He sigh the feet departed so,  
For that betokeneth mochel wo.

Whan that the world devided is,  
It mot algate fare amis,  
For erth, which meined is with steel,  
To-gider may nought laste wele,  
But if that one that other waste,  
So mot it nedes fail in haste.

The stone, whiche fro the hilly stage  
He sigh down falle on that ymage  
And hath it into pouder broke,  
That sweven hath Daniel unloke

Hic loquitur de  
interpretacione  
sompnii, et primo  
dicit de significa-  
cione capitis aurei.

De pectore argenteo.

De ventre eneo.

De tibeis ferreis.

De significacione  
pedum, qui ex dua-  
bus materiis discor-  
dantibus ad invi-  
cem divisi extite-  
runt.

De lapidis statuam  
confringentis sig-  
nificacione.



And said, that it is goddes might  
 Which whan men wene most upright  
 To stonde shal hem over caste.  
 And that is of this world the laste,  
 And than a newe shal beginne,  
 From whiche a man shal never twinne  
 Or al to paine or al to pees,  
 That world shal laste endeles.

*Hic consequenter  
 scribit, qualiter hu-  
 ius seculi regna va-  
 riis mutacionibus,  
 prout in dicta statua  
 figurabatur, secun-  
 dum temporum  
 distinctiones sensi-  
 biliter hactenus di-  
 minuuntur.*

*De seculo aureo,  
 quod in capite sta-  
 tue designatum est  
 a tempore ipsius  
 Nabugodonosor  
 regis Caldee usque  
 in regnum Cyri re-  
 gis Persarum.*

Lo, thus expoundeth Daniel  
 The kinges sweven faire and wel  
 In Babiloine the citee,  
 Wher that the wifest of Caldee  
 Ne couthen wite what it mente,  
 But he tolde al the hole entente,  
 As in partie it is befalle.  
 Of golde the first regne of alle  
 Was in that kinges time tho,  
 And laste many daies so.  
 There whiles that the monarchie  
 Of al the worlde in that partie  
 To Babiloine was subgite  
 And helde him still in suche a plight,  
 Til that the world began diverse.  
 And that was, whan the kinge of Perse,  
 Which Cyrus hight, ayein the pees  
 Forth with his sone Cambises  
 Of Babiloine all that empire,  
 Right as they wolde hem self desire,  
 Put under in subjection  
 And toke it in possession,

And slain was Baltazar the king,  
Which lost his regne and all his thing.

And thus whan they it hadde wonne,  
The worlde of silver was begonne  
And that of gold was passed oute,  
And in this wise it goth aboute  
Into the regne of Darius,  
And than it fell to Perse thus.  
There Alisaundre put hem under,  
Which wrought of armes many a wonder,  
So that the monarchie lefte  
With Grecs and here estate up lefte,  
And Persiens gone under fote,  
So suffre they, that nedes mote.

And tho the world began of bras,  
And that of silver ended was,  
But for the time thus it laste,  
Til it befelle, that at laste  
This king, whan that his day was come,  
With strength of deth was overcome.  
And nethes yet or he dide  
He shope his regne to deuide  
To knightes, which him hadde served,  
And after that they have deserved  
Yaf the conquestes, that he wanne,  
Wherof great werre tho beganne  
Among hem, that the regnes had,  
Through proud envie which hem lad,  
Til it befelle ayein hem thus.  
The noble Cesar Julius,

*De seculo argen-  
teo, quod in pec-  
tore designatum  
est a tempore ipsius  
regis Cyri usque in  
regnum Alexandri  
regis Macedonie.*

*De seculo eneo,  
quod in ventre de-  
signatum est a tem-  
pore ipsius Alex-  
andri usque in reg-  
num Julii Roma-  
norum imperato-  
ris.*

Which tho was kinge of Rome-londe,  
 With great bataile and with strong honde  
 All Grece, Perse and eke Caldee  
 Wan and put under, so that he  
 Nought al only of thorient  
 But al the marche of thoccident  
 Governeth under his empire  
 As he that was hole lord and fire  
 And held through his chivalrie  
 Of al this worlde the monarchie  
 And was the first of that honour,  
 Which taketh name of emperour.

*De seculo ferreo,  
 quod in tibiis de-  
 signatum est a tem-  
 pore Julii usque in  
 regnum Caroli  
 magni regis Fran-  
 corum.*

Where Rome thanne wolde assaile,  
 There mighte no thing contrevaille,  
 But every contre must obeie.  
 Tho goth the regne of bras aweie  
 And comen is the worlde of steel  
 And stode above upon the whele.  
 As steel is hardest in his kinde  
 Above al other that men finde  
 Of metals, such was Rome tho  
 The mightiest and laste so  
 Long time amonges the Romains,  
 Til they become so vilains,  
 That the fals emperour Leo  
 With Constantin his sone also  
 The patrimonie and the richesse,  
 Which to Silvester in pure almesse  
 The firste Constantinus lefte,  
 Fro holy chirche they berefte.



But Adrian, which pope was  
And figh the mischef of this cas,  
Goth into Fraunce for to pleine  
And praieth the great Charlemaine  
For Cristes sake and soule hele,  
That he wol take the quarele  
Of holy chirche in his defence.  
And Charles for the reverence  
Of god the cause hath undertake  
And with his host the waie take  
Over the mountes of Lumbardie.  
Of Rome and al the tirannie  
With bloody swerd he overcome  
And the citee with strengthe nome  
In suche a wise and there he wroughte,  
That holy chirche ayein he broughte  
Into fraunchise and doth restore  
The popes luste and yaf him more,  
And thus whan he his god hath served,  
He toke as he hath well deserved  
The diademe and was coroned  
Of Rome, and thus was abandoned  
Thempire, whiche came never ayeine  
Into the hande of no Romaine.  
But a long time it stode so stille  
Under the Frenshe kinges wille,  
Til that fortune her whele so lad,  
That afterward Lumbardes it had  
Nought by the swerd, but by suffraunce  
Of him, that tho was king of Fraunce

Whiche Karle Calvus cleped was,  
 And he resigneth in this cas  
 Thempire of Rome unto Lowis  
 His coufin, which a Lumbarde is,  
 And so it laste into the yere  
 Of Alberte and of Berenger.

*De seculo novissimis jam temporibus ad similitudinem pedum in discordiam lapso et diviso, quod post decessum ipsius Caroli, cum imperium Romanorum in manus Longobardorum pervenerat, tempore Alberti et Berengarii incepit. Nam ob eorum divisionem contingit, ut Alemani imperatoriam adepti sint majestatem, in cuius solium quendam principem Theutonicum Othonem nomine sublimari primum constituerunt. Et ab illo regno incipiente divisio per universum orbem in posteros concrevit, unde nos ad alterutrum divisi huius seculi consummacionem ultimi jam expectamus.*

But than upon dissenfion  
 They felle and in division  
 Among hem self that were grete,  
 So that they losfe the beyete  
 Of worship and of worldes pees.  
 But in proverbe netheles  
 Men sain: ful selden is that welthe  
 Can suffre his owne estate in helthe,  
 And that was in the Lumbardes sene,  
 Suche comun strife was hem betwene  
 Through covetise and through envie,  
 That every man drough his partie,  
 Which mighte leden any route  
 Withinne bourgh and eke withoute.  
 The comun right hath no felawe,  
 So that the governaunce of lawe  
 Was lost and for necessite  
 Of that they stode in suche degre  
 Al only through division  
 Hem nedeth in conclusion  
 Of straunge londes helpe beside,  
 And thus for they hem self divide  
 And stonden out of reule uneven,  
 Of Alemaine princes seven

They chose in this condicion,  
That upon here election  
Thempire of Rome sholde stonde.  
And thus they left it out of honde  
For lacke of grace and it forfoke,  
That Alemains upon hem toke.  
And to confermen here estate  
Of that they founden in debate  
They token the possession  
After the compoficion  
Among hem self and ther upon  
They made an emperour anon,  
Whos name as the cronique telleth  
Was Othes, and so forth it dwelleth.  
Fro thilke daie yet unto this  
Thempire of Rome hath ben and is  
To thalemains, and in this wise  
As ye to-fore have herd devise  
How Daniel the sweven expoundeth  
Of that ymage, on whom he foundeth  
The world, which after sholde falle,  
Come is the last token of alle.  
Upon the feet of erthe and steel  
So stant the world now every dele  
Departed, which began right tho,  
Whan Rome was devided so.  
And that is for to rewe fore,  
For alwey fithe more and more  
The worlde empeireth every day,  
Wherof the sothe shewe may.



At Rome first if we beginne,  
 The walle and al the citee withinne  
 Stant in ruine and in decas,  
 The feld is where the palais was,  
 The town is wast, and over that  
 If we behold thilke estate,  
 Whiche whilome was of the Romains  
 Of knighthod and of citizeins  
 To peise now with that beforne,  
 The chaf is take for the corne,  
 And for to speke of Romes might  
 Unnethes stant ther ought upright  
 Of worship or of worldes good,  
 As it before time stood.  
 And why the worship is away  
 If that a man the sothe say,  
 The cause hath ben devision,  
 Which moder of confusion  
 Is, where she cometh overall  
 Nought only of the temporall  
 But of the spirital also.  
 The dede proveth it is so  
 And hath do many daies er this  
 Through venim, which that medled is  
 In holy chirche of erthely thing.  
 For Crist him self maketh knowleching,  
 That no man may to-gider serve  
 God and the world, but if he swerve  
 Froward that one and stonde unstable,  
 And Cristes word may nought be fable.

The thing so open is at theye,  
 It nedeth nought to specifie  
 Or speke ought more in this matere.  
 But in this wise a man may lere  
 How that the worlde is gone aboute,  
 The whiche wel nigh is wered out  
 After the forme of that figure,  
 Which Daniel in his scripture  
 Expoundeth as to-fore is tolde,  
 Of bras, of silver and of golde  
 The worlde is passed and agone,  
 And now upon his olde tone  
 It stant of brutel erthe and steel,  
 The whiche accorden never a dele,  
 So mot it nedes swerve aside  
 As thing the which men seen divide.

Thapostel writ unto us alle  
 And saith, that upon us is falle  
 Thend of the world, so may we knowe  
 This ymage is nigh overthrowe,  
 By which this world was signified,  
 That whilom was so magnified  
 And now is olde and feble and vile  
 Full of mischefe and of peril  
 And stant divided eke also  
 Lich to the feet, that were so  
 As I tolde of the statue above.  
 And thus men seen, through lacke of love  
 Where as the lond divided is,  
 It mot algate fare amis.

Hic dicit secun-  
 dum apostolum,  
 quod nos sumus, in  
 quos fines seculi  
 devenerunt.

And now to loke on every fide  
 A man may se the world divide,  
 The werres ben so generall  
 Amonge the Cristen overall,  
 That every man now secheth wreche,  
 And yet these clerkes alday preche  
 And sain, good dede may none be  
 Whiche stant nought upon charite.  
 I not how charite may stonde  
 Where dedly werre is taken on honde,  
 But al this wo is cause of man  
 The which that wit and reson can,  
 And that in token and in witnesse  
 That ilke ymage bare liknesse  
 Of man and of none other beste.  
 For first unto the mannes heste  
 Was every creature ordeigned,  
 But afterward it was restreigned,  
 Whan that he fel they fellen eke,  
 Whan he wax fike they woxen fike,  
 For as the man hath passion,  
 Of fikenesse in comparison,  
 So suffren other creatures.  
 Lo, first the heavenly figures.

Hic scribit, quod  
 ex divisionis pas-  
 sione singula creati  
 detrimentum cor-  
 ruptibile paciun-  
 tur.

The sonne and mone eclipsen both  
 And ben with mannes sinne wroth,  
 The purest air for sinne aloste  
 Hath ben and is corrupt ful ofte,  
 Right now the highe windes blowe  
 And anon after they ben lowe,



Now cloudy and now clere it is,  
So it may proven wel by this,  
A mannes finne is for to hate,  
Which maketh the welken to debate.  
And for to se the properte  
Of every thinge in his degre,  
Benethe forth amonges us here  
Al stant a lich in this matere.  
The see now ebbeth and now it floweth,  
The lond now welketh and now it groweth,  
Now be the trees with leves grene,  
Now they be bare and no thing sene,  
Now be there lusty somer floures,  
Now be there stormy winter shoures,  
Now be the daies, now the nightes,  
So stant there no thing al uprightes,  
Nowe it is light, nowe it is derke,  
And thus stant al the worldes werke  
After the disposicion  
Of man and his condicion.  
Forthy Gregoire in his morall  
Saith, that a man in speciall  
The lasse worlde is properly,  
And that he proveth redily,  
For man of soule resonable  
Is to an angel resemblable  
And lich to beste he hath feling  
And lich to tres he hath growing.  
The stones ben and so is he,  
Thus of his propre qualite

The man, as telleth the clergie,  
 Is as a worlde in his partie,  
 And whan this litel world mistorneth  
 The grete worlde al overtorneth.  
 The lond, the see, the firmament  
 They axen alle jugement  
 Ayein the man and make him werre,  
 Ther while him selfe stant out of herre,  
 The remenaunt wol nought accorde,  
 And in this wise as I recorde  
 The man is cause of alle wo,  
 Why this worlde is divided so.

Hic dicit secundum  
 Evangelium, quod  
 omne regnum in se  
 divisum desolabi-  
 tur.

Division the gospel saith  
 One house upon an other laith,  
 Til that the regne al overthrowe.  
 And thus may every man wel knowe  
 Division aboven alle  
 Is thing, which maketh the world to falle  
 And ever hath do, sith it began,  
 It may firste prove upon a man.

Quod ex sue com-  
 plexionis materia  
 divisus homo mor-  
 talis existit.

The which for his complexion  
 Is made upon division  
 Of cold of hot of moist of drie,  
 He mot by verry kinde die.  
 For the contraire of his estate  
 Stant evermore in such debate,  
 Til that a part be overcome  
 There may no final pees be nome.  
 But otherwise if a man were  
 Made al to-gider of one matere

Withouten interrupcion,  
 There shulde no corrupcion  
 Engendre upon that unite,  
 But for there is diversite  
 Within him selfe, he may nought laste,  
 That he ne deieth at the laste.  
 But in a man yet over this  
 Full great division there is,  
 Through which that he is ever in strife  
 While that him lasteth any life.

The body and the soule also  
 Among hem ben divided so,  
 That what thing that the body hateth  
 The soule loveth and debateth.  
 But netheles ful ofte is sene  
 Of werre whiche is hem betwene  
 The feble hath wonne the victoire,  
 And who so draweth into memoire  
 What hath befall of olde and newe  
 He may that werre sore rewe,  
 Which first began in paradis.  
 For there was proved what it is  
 And what disese there it wrought,  
 For thilke werre tho forth brought  
 The vice of alle dedly sinne  
 Through which division came inne  
 Among the men in erthe here,  
 And was the cause and the matere,  
 Why god the grete flodes sende  
 Of all the world and made an ende

Quod homo ex corporis et anime conditione divisus, sicut salvacionis, ita dampnacionis aptitudinem ingreditur.

Qualiter Adam a statu innocencie divisus a paradiso voluptatis in terram laboris peccatorum projectus est.

Qualiter populi per universum orbem a cultura dei divisi, Noe cum sua sequela dumtaxat exceptis, diluvio interierunt.



But Noe with his felaship,  
Which only weren sauf by ship.  
And over that through sinne it come,  
That Nembroth such emprise nome,

*Qualiter in edificacione Turris Babel, quam in dei contemptum Nembroth erexit, lingua prius hebraica in varias linguas cœlica vindicta dividebatur.*

Whan he the toure Babel on hight  
Let make, as he that wolde fight  
Ayein the highe goddes might,  
Wherof devided anon right  
Was the language in fuche entent  
There wiste non what other ment,  
So that they mighten nought procede.  
And thus it stant of every dede  
Where sinne taketh the case on honde  
It may upright nought longe stonde,  
For sinne of his condicion  
Is moder of division.

*Qualiter mundus, qui in statu divisionis quasi cotidianus presenti tempore vexatur flagellis, a lapide superveniente, id est a divina potencia usque ad resolutionem omnis carnis subito conteretur.*

And token whan the world shall faile,  
For so saith Crist withoute faile,  
That nigh upon the worldes ende  
Pees and accorde away shall wende  
And alle charite shall cease  
Among the men and hate encrease.  
And whan these tokens ben befall  
All sodeinly the stone shall fall,  
As Daniel it hath beknowe,  
Which all this world shal overthrowe  
And every man shall than arise  
To joie or elles to juise,  
Where that he shall for ever dwell  
Or straight to heven or straight to hell.

In heven is pees and al accorde,  
 But helle is full of fuch difcorde  
 That there may be no love day.  
 Forthy good is while a man may  
 Echone to sette pees with other  
 And loven as his owne brother,  
 So may he winne worldes welthe  
 And afterwarde his foule helthe.

But wolde god that now were one  
 An other fuche as Arione,  
 Whiche had an harpe of fuch temprure  
 And therto of fo good mefure  
 He fong, that he the beftes wilde  
 Made of his note tame and milde,  
 The hinde in pees with the leon,  
 The wolfe in pees with the molton,  
 The hare in pees ftood with the hounde,  
 And every man upon this grounde  
 Whiche Arion that time herde  
 As well the lorde as the fhepherde  
 He brought hem all in good accorde,  
 So that the comun with the lorde  
 And lord with the comun alfo  
 He sette in love bothe two  
 And put away malencolie.  
 That was a luftie melodie  
 Whan every man with other low.  
 And if ther were fuche one now  
 Whiche couth harpe as he tho ded  
 He might availe in many a ftede

Hic narrat exemplum  
 de concordia et uni-  
 tate inter homines  
 provocanda. Et dicit,  
 qualiter quidam Ari-  
 on nuper citharista  
 ex fui cantus cithare-  
 que consona melodia  
 tante virtutis extite-  
 rat, ut ipse non so-  
 lum virum cum viro,  
 sed etiam leonem cum  
 cerva, lupum cum ag-  
 no, canem cum lepore  
 ipsum audientes un-  
 animiter absque ulla  
 discordia ad in vicem  
 pacificavit.

To make pees where nowe is hate.  
For whan men thenken to debate  
I not what other thinge is good,  
But wher that wisdom waxeth wood  
And reson torneth into rage,  
So that mesure upon oultrage  
Hath set this worlde, it is to drede,  
For that bringeth in the comun drede  
Whiche stant at every mannes dore.  
But whan the sharpnesse of the spore  
The horse side smit to fore  
It greveth ofte. And now no more  
As for to speke of this matere,  
Which none but only god may stere.

*Explicit Prologus.*





## CONFESSIO AMANTIS.

### Incipit Liber Primus.

*Naturatus amor nature legibus orbem  
Subdit et unanimes concitat esse feras.  
Huius enim mundi princeps amor esse videtur,  
Cuius eget dives pauper et omnis opes.  
Sunt in agone pares amor et fortunaque, cecas  
Plebis ad insidias vertit uterque rotas.  
Est amor egra salus, vexata quies, pius error,  
Bellica pax, vulnus dulce, suave malum.*



MAY nought strecche up to  
the heven  
Min hondne setten al in even  
This world, whiche ever is  
in balaunce, [saunce  
It stant nought in my suffi-

So great things to compasse.  
But I mote lette it over passe  
And treaten upon other things,  
Forthy the stile of my writings  
Fro this day forth I thenke chaunge  
And speake of thinge is nought so strange,

Postquam in prologo tractatum haecenus existit, qualiter hodiernae conditionis divisio charitatis dilectionem superavit, intendit auctor ad presens suum libellum, cuius nomen Confessio Amantis nuncupatur, componere de illo amore, a quo non solum humanum genus, sed et cuncta animantia naturaliter subijciuntur. Et quia nonnulli amantes ultra quam expedit desiderii passionibus crebro stimulantur, materia libri per totum

super hiis specialiter  
diffunditur.

Whiche every kinde hath upon honde  
And wherupon the world mote stonde  
And hath done sithen it began  
And shall while there is any man,  
And that is love, of whiche I mene  
To treate, as after shall be sene,  
In whiche there can no man him reule,  
For loves lawe is out of reule  
That of to moche or of to lite  
Wellnigh is every man to wite.  
And netheles there is no man  
In al this world so wise, that can  
Of love temper the mesure.  
But as it falleth in aventure  
For wit ne strengthe may nought helpe  
And he which elles wolde him yelp  
Is rathest throwen under foote,  
Ther can no wight therof do bote.  
For yet was never such covine  
That couth ordeine a medicine  
To thing, which god in lawe of kinde  
Hath set, for there may no man finde  
The righte salve for suche a sore.  
It hath and shal be evermore  
That love is maister, where he will,  
There can no life make other skill,  
For where as ever him list to set  
There is no might, which him may let,  
But what shall fallen ate laste.  
The sothe can no wisdom cast,

But as it falleth upon chaunce,  
 For if there ever was balaunce  
 Whiche of fortune stant governed,  
 I may well leve as I am lerned  
 That love hath that balaunce on honde  
 Whiche wol no reson understonde.  
 For love is blinde and may nought se,  
 Forthy may no certeinte  
 Be sette upon his jugement.  
 But as the whele aboute went  
 He yeveth his graces undeserved  
 And fro that man whiche hath him served  
 Ful ofte he taketh away his fees,  
 As he that plaieth at the dies  
 And therupon what shal befall  
 He not, til that the chaunce fall  
 Where he shal lese or he shal winne.  
 And thus full ofte men beginne  
 That if they wisten what it ment  
 They wol chaunge all here entent.

And for to prove it is so  
 I am my selfe one of tho  
 Whiche to this scole am underfonge.  
 For it is fithe go nought longe  
 As for to speake of this matere  
 I may you telle, if ye woll here  
 A wonder hap, which me befelle  
 That was to me bothe harde and felle,  
 Touchend of love and his fortune,  
 The which me liketh to commune

Hic quasi in persona aliorum, quos amor alligat, fingens se auctor esse amantem, varias eorum passiones variis huius libri distinctionibus per singula scribere proponit.



And plainly for to tellen it oute,  
 To hem that ben lovers aboute  
 Fro point to pointe I wol declare  
 And writen of my woful care,  
 My woful day, my woful chaunce,  
 That men mow take remembraunce  
 Of that they shall here after rede.  
 For in good feith this wolde I rede,  
 That every man ensample take  
 Of wisdom, which is him betake,  
 And that he wote of good apprise  
 To teche it forth, for suche emprise  
 Is for to preise, and therefore I  
 Wol write and shewe all openly,  
 How love and I to-gider mette,  
 Wherof the worlde ensample fette  
 May after this, whan I am go,  
 Of thilke unsely jolif wo,  
 Whose reule stant out of the wey  
 Now glad and now gladnesse away,  
 And yet it may nought be withstonde  
 For ought that men may understonde.

2. *Non ego Sampsonis vires, non Herculis arma  
 Vinco, sum sed ut hii victus amore pari.  
 Ut discant alii docet experientia facti,  
 Rebus in ambiguis que sit habenda via.  
 Devius ordo ducis temptata pericla sequentem  
 Instruit a tergo me simul ille cadat.  
 Me quibus ergo Venus casibus laqueavit amantem,  
 Orbis in exemplum scribere tendo palam.*

Hic declarat materiam  
 dicens, qualiter  
 Cupido quodam

Upon the point that is befall  
 Of love, in which that I am fall,

I thenke telle my matere.  
 Nowe herken who that woll it here  
 Of my fortune how that it ferde  
 This enderday, as I forth ferde  
 To walke, as I you telle may.  
 And that was in the moneth of May,  
 Whan every brid hath chose his make  
 And thenketh his merthes for to make  
 Of love, that he hath acheved.  
 But so was I no thing releved,  
 For I was further fro my love  
 Than erthe is fro the heven above,  
 And for to speke of any spede  
 So wiste I me none other rede,  
 But as it were a man forfare  
 Unto the wood I gan to fare,  
 Nought for to finge with the briddes,  
 For whan I was the wood amidde  
 I fonde a swote grene pleine  
 And there I gan my wo compleigne  
 Wisshinge and wepinge all min one.  
 For other mirthes made I none.  
 So hard me was that ilke throwe,  
 That ofte fithes overthrowe  
 To grounde I was withoute brethe  
 And ever I wished after dethe,  
 Whan I out of my peine awoke,  
 And caste up many a pitous loke  
 Unto the heven and faide thus :  
 O thou Cupide, O thou Venus

ignito jaculo sui  
 cordis memoriam  
 gravi ulcere perforavit, quod Venus  
 percipiens ipsum,  
 ut dicit, quasi in  
 mortis articulo  
 spasmatum ad  
 confitendum se  
 Genio sacerdoti  
 super amoris causa  
 sic semivivum specialiter commen-  
 davit.

46      *CONFESSIO AMANTIS.*

Thou god of love and thou goddesse,  
 Where is pite? where is mekenesse?  
 Now doth me plainly live or die,  
 For certes suche a maladie  
 As I now have and longe have had  
 It mighte make a wise man mad,  
 If that it shulde longe endure.  
 O Venus, quene of loves cure,  
 Thou life, thou lust, thou mannes hele,  
 Beholde my cause and my quarele  
 And yef me some part of thy grace,  
 So that I may finde in this place,  
 If thou be gracious or none.  
 And with that worde I figh anone  
 The kinge of love and quene bothe.  
 But he that king with eyen wrothe  
 His chere aweiward fro me caste  
 And forthe he passed ate laste.  
 But netheles er he forth wente  
 A firy dart me thought he hente  
 And threwe it through min herte rote.  
 In him fonde I none other bote,  
 For lenger list him nought to dwelle.  
 But she whiche is the source and welle  
 Of wele or wo, that shal betide  
 To hem that loven at that tide,  
 Abode but for to tellen here  
 She cast on me no goodly chere,  
 Thus netheles to me she saide:  
 What art thou, sone? and I abraide



Right as a man doth out of slepe,  
And therof toke she right good kepe  
And bad me nothing be adradde.  
But for al that I was nought gladde,  
For I ne sigh no cause why.  
And eft she asketh, what was I?  
I faide : a caitif that lith here,  
What wolde ye my lady dere?  
Shall I be hole or elles die?  
She faide : telle thy maladie,  
What is thy fore of which thou pleignest,  
Ne hide it nought, for if thou feignest  
I can do the no medicine.  
Madame, I am a man of thine  
That in thy court have longe served  
And axe that I have deserved  
Some wele after my longe wo.  
And she began to loure tho  
And faide : there be many of you  
Faitours, and so may be that thou  
Art right fuche one and by faintise  
Saiſt, that thou haſt me do ſervice.  
And netheles she wiſte wele  
My word ſtood on an other whele  
Withouten any faiterie.  
But algate of my maladie  
She bad me tell and ſay her trouthe.  
Madame, if ye wolde have routhe,  
Quod I, than wolde I telle you.  
Say forth, quod she, and telle me how,

Shewe me thy likenesse every dele.  
 Madame, that can I do wele,  
 Be so my life therto wol laste.  
 With that her loke on me she caste  
 And saide : in aunter if thou live  
 My wille is first, that thou be shrive  
 And netheles how that it is  
 I wot my selfe, but for all this  
 Unto my prest which cometh anone  
 I wol thou telle it one and one  
 Both al thy thought and al thy werke.  
 O Genius min owne clerke,  
 Come forth and here this mannes shrifte,  
 Quod Venus tho, and I upliste  
 Min hede with that and gan beholde  
 The selfe prest, whiche as she wolde  
 Was redy there and set him doune  
 To here my confession.

3.      *Confessus Genio si sit medicina salutis  
           Experiar morbis, quos tulit ipsa Venus.  
           Lesa quidem ferro medicantur membra salutis,  
           Raro tamen medicum vulnus amoris habet.*

Hic dicit, qualiter  
 Genio pro confes-  
 fore sedenti provo-  
 lutus amans ad  
 confitendum se  
 flexis genibus in-  
 curvatur, suppli-  
 cans tamen, ut ad  
 sui sensus informa-  
 tionem confessor  
 ille in dicendis op-  
 ponere sibi benignius dignaretur.

This worthy prest, this holy man  
 To me spekend thus began  
 And saide : Benedicite  
 My sone, of the felicity  
 Of love and eke of all the wo  
 Thou shalt be shrive of bothe two,  
 What thou er this for loves sake  
 Hast felt let nothing be forsake,

Tel plainly as it is befalle.  
 And with that worde I gan down falle  
 On knees and with devocion  
 And with full great contricion  
 I saide thanne : Dominus,  
 Min holy fader Genius,  
 So as thou haste experience  
 Of love, for whose reverence  
 Thou shalt me shriven at this time,  
 I pray the let me nought mistime  
 My shrifte, for I am destourbed  
 In all min herte and so contourbed,  
 That I ne may my wittes gete.  
 So shal I moche thing foryete,  
 But if thou wolt my shrifte oppose  
 Fro point to pointe, than I suppose  
 There shall nothing be left behinde.  
 But now my wittes be so blinde,  
 That I ne can my selfe teche.  
 Tho he beganne anon to preche  
 And with his wordes debonaire  
 He said to me softe and faire :  
 My sone, I am assigned here  
 Thy shrifte to oppose and here  
 By Venus the goddesse above,  
 Whose prest I am touchend of love.

But nethes for certain skill  
 I mote algate and nedes will  
 Nought only make my spekinges  
 Of love, but of other thinges,

Sermo Genii facer-  
 dotis super confes-  
 sione ad amantem.



That touchen to the cause of vice.  
For that belongeth to thoffice  
Of prest, whose ordre that I bere,  
So that I wol nothing forbere,  
That I the vices one and one  
Ne shall the shewen everichone,  
Wherof thou might take evidence  
To reule with thy conscience.  
But of conclusion finall  
Conclude I wolde in speciall  
For love whose servaunt I am  
And why the cause is that I cam.  
So thenke I to do bothe two,  
First that min ordre longeth to  
The vices for to telle a rewe,  
But nexte above all other shewe  
Of love I wol the propretes  
How that they stonde by degrees  
After the disposicion  
Of Venus, whose condicion  
I must folwe as I am holde,  
For I with love am al witholde,  
So that the lasse I am to wite,  
Though I ne conne but a lite  
Of other thinges that bene wise,  
I am nought taught in suche a wise.  
For it is nought my comun use  
To speke of vices and vertuse,  
But all of love and of his lore,  
For Venus bokes of no more

Me techen nouthen text ne gloſe.  
 But for als moche as I ſuppoſe  
 It ſit a preſt to be wel thewed  
 And ſhame it is if he be lewed,  
 Of my preſthode after the forme  
 I wol thy ſhrifte ſo enforme,  
 That at the laſte thou ſhalt here  
 The vices, and to thy matere  
 Of love I ſhal hem ſo remeve,  
 That thou ſhalt knowe what they meve.  
 For what a man ſhall axe or ſaine  
 Touchend of ſhrifte, it mot be pleine,  
 It nedeth nought to make it queinte,  
 For trouth his wordes wol nought peinte.  
 That I wol axe of the forthy,  
 My ſone, it ſhal be ſo plainly,  
 That thou ſhalt knowe and underſtonde  
 The pointes of ſhrift how that they ſtonde.

*Viſus et auditus fragiles ſunt oſtia mentis,  
 Que vicioſa manus claudere nulla poteſt.  
 Eſt ibi larga via, graditur qua cordis ad antrum  
 Hoſtis et ingrediens ſoſſa talenta rapit.  
 Hec mihi confeſſor Genius primordia profert,  
 Dum ſit in extremis vita remorſa malis.  
 Nunc tamen ut poterit ſemiviva loquela fateri,  
 Verba per os timide conſcia mentis agam.*

4.

Betwene the life and dethe I herde  
 This preſtes tale er I anſwerde,  
 And than I praid him for to ſay  
 His will and I it wolde obey  
 After the forme of his appriſe.  
 Tho ſpake he to me in ſuch a wiſe

Hic incipit confeſſio amantis, cui de duobus precipue quinque ſenſuum, hoc eſt de viſu et auditu confeſſor preceteris opponit.

And bad me, that I sholde thrive  
As touchende of my wittes five  
And shape, that they were amended  
Of that I hadde hem mispended.  
For tho be properly the gates,  
Through which as to the hert algates  
Cometh all thing unto the feire,  
Which may the mannes soule empeire.  
And now this matter is brought in,  
My sone, I thenke first beginne  
To wit, how that thin eye hath stonde,  
The whiche is as I understonde  
The most principall of alle,  
Through whom that peril may befall.  
And for to speke in loves kinde  
Full many fuche a man may finde,  
Whiche ever caste aboute here eye  
To loke, if that they might aspie  
Ful oft thing, which hem ne toucheth,  
But only that here herte foucheth  
In hindringe of an other wight.  
And thus ful many a worthy knight  
And many a lusty lady bothe  
Have be full ofte fithes wrothe,  
So that an eye is as a thefe  
To love and doth ful great meschefe,  
And also for his owne part  
Ful ofte thilke fry dart  
Of love, which that ever brenneth,  
Through him into the herte renneth.



And thus a mannes eye ferst  
 Him selfe greveth altherwerst,  
 And many a time that he knoweth  
 Unto his owne harme it groweth.  
 My sone, herken now forthy  
 A tale, to be ware therby  
 Thin eye for to kepe and warde,  
 So that it passe nought his warde.

Ovide telleth in his boke  
 Ensamble touchend of misloke  
 And faith, how whilom ther was one  
 A worthy lord, whiche Acteon  
 Was hote, and he was cousin nigh  
 To him, that Thebes first on high  
 Upsette, which king Cadme hight.  
 This Acteon, as he wel might,  
 Above all other cast his chere  
 And used it from yere to yere  
 With houndes and with grete hornes  
 Among the wodes and the thornes  
 To make his hunting and his chace,  
 Where him best thought in every place  
 To finden game in his way,  
 There rode he for to hunte and play.  
 So him befelle upon a tide  
 On his hunting as he cam ride  
 In a foreste alone he was,  
 He figh upon the grene gras  
 The faire freshe floures springe,  
 He herd among the leves finge

Hic narrat confessor  
 exemplum de visu ab  
 illicitis preservando,  
 dicens, qualiter Ac-  
 teon Cadmi regis  
 Thebarum nepos,  
 dum in quadam fo-  
 resta venacionis causa  
 spaciari, accidit, ut  
 ipse quendam fontem  
 nemorosa arborum  
 pulchritudine cir-  
 cumventum superve-  
 niens vidit ibi Dia-  
 nam cum suis nim-  
 phis nudam in flumine  
 balneantem, quam di-  
 ligentius intuens ocu-  
 los suos a muliebri  
 nuditate nullatenus  
 avertere volebat, un-  
 de indignata Diana  
 ipsum in cervi figu-  
 ram transformavit.  
 Quem canes proprii  
 apprehendentes mor-  
 tiferis dentibus peni-  
 tus dilaniarunt.

The throstel with the nightingale.  
 Thus er he wist into a dale  
 He came, wher was a litel pleine  
 All rounde aboute wel beseine  
 With busshes grene and cedres high,  
 And there within he caste his eye.  
 Amid the plaine he saw a welle  
 So faire there might no man telle,  
 In which Diana naked stood  
 To bathe and play her in the flood  
 With many a nimphe, which her serveth.  
 But he his eye away ne swerveth  
 Fro her, which was naked all.  
 And she was wonder wroth withall  
 And him, as she which was goddesse,  
 Forshope anone and the likenesse  
 She made him take of an herte,  
 Which was tofore his houndes sterte,  
 That ronne besilich aboute  
 With many an horne and many a route,  
 That maden mochel noife and crie,  
 And ate laste unhappilie  
 This hert his owne houndes slough  
 And him for vengeaunce all to-drough.

Confessor.      Lo now, my sone, what it is  
 A man to caste his eye amis,  
 Which Acteon hath dere abought,  
 Beware forthy and do it nought.  
 For ofte who that hede toke  
 Better is to winke than to loke.



And for to proven it is so  
 Ovide the poete also  
 A tale, whiche to this matere  
 Accordeth, faith, as thou shalt here.

In Methamor it telleth thus,  
 How that a lord, whiche Phorceus  
 Was hote, hadde doughters thre.  
 But upon their nativite  
 Such was the constellacion,  
 That out of mannes nacion  
 Fro kinde they be so miswent,  
 That to the likenesse of the serpent  
 They were bothe, and so that one  
 Of hem was cleped Stellibone,  
 That other suster Suriale,  
 The thrid as telleth in the tale  
 Medusa hight, and netheles  
 Of comun name Gorgones,  
 In every contre there about  
 As monstres, whiche that men doute,  
 Men clepen hem, and but one eye  
 Among hem thre in purpartie  
 They had, of which they mighte se,  
 Now hathe it this, now hath it she.  
 After that cause and nede it ladde  
 By throwes eche of hem it hadde.  
 A wonder thing yet more amis  
 There was, wherof I telle al this,  
 What man on hem his chere caste  
 And hem behelde, he was als faste

Hic ponit aliud exemplum de eodem, ubi dicit, quod quidam princeps nomine Phorceus tres genuit filias Gorgones a vulgo nuncupatas, que uno partu exorte deformitatem monstrorum serpentinum obtinuerunt, quibus, cum in etatem pervernerant, talis destinata fuerat natura, quod quicumque in eas aspiceret in lapidem subito mutabatur, et sic quamplures incaute respicientes visis illis perierunt, sed Perseus miles clipeo Palladis gladioque Mercurii munitus eas extra montem Atlantis cohabitantes animo audaci absque sui periculo interfecit.



Out of a man into a stone  
 Forshape, and thus ful many one  
 Deceived were, of that they wolde  
 Misloke, where that they ne shulde.  
 But Perseus that worthy knight,  
 Whom Pallas of her grete might  
 Halpe and toke him a shiield therto,  
 And eke the god Mercury also  
 Lent him a swerde, he as it fell  
 Beyond Athlans the highe hill  
 These monstres fought and there he fonde  
 Diverse men of thilke londe  
 Through sight of hem mistorned were  
 Stondend as stones here and there.  
 But he, which wisdome and prowesse  
 Hath of the god and the goddesse,  
 The shielde of Pallas gan embrace,  
 With which he covereth sauf his face,  
 Mercurie's swerde and out he drough  
 And so he bare him, that he slough  
 These dredfull monstres alle thre.

Confessor.

Lo now, my sone, avise the,  
 That thou thy fight nought misuse,  
 Cast nought thin eye upon Meduse,  
 That thou be torned into stone.  
 For so wise man was never none  
 But if he woll his eye kepe  
 And take of foul delite no kepe,  
 That he with luste nis ofte nome  
 Through strengthe of love and overcome.

Of mislokinge how it hath ferde,  
 As I have told, now hast thou herde.  
 My gode sone, take good hede  
 And over this yet I the rede,  
 That thou beware of thin hering,  
 Which to the herte the tiding  
 Of many a vanite hath brought  
 To tarie with a manes thought.  
 And netheles good is to here  
 Such thing, wherof a man may lere,  
 That to vertue is accordaunt,  
 And toward all the remenaunt  
 Good is to torne his ere fro,  
 For elles but a man do so  
 Him may ful ofte misbefalle.  
 I rede ensample amonges alle,  
 Wherof to kepe wel an ere  
 It oughte put a man in fere.

A serpent, which that aspidis  
 Is cleped, of his kinde hath this,  
 That he the stone noblest of alle  
 The which that men carbuncle calle  
 Bereth in his heed above on highte.  
 For which whan that a man by flighte  
 The stone to winne and him to daunte  
 With his carecte him wolde enchaunte,  
 Anone as he perceiveth that,  
 He lith down his one ere al plat  
 Unto the ground and halt it faste  
 And eke that other ere als faste

Hic narrat confessor  
 exemplum, ut non ab  
 auris exaudicione fa-  
 tua animus deceptus  
 involvatur. Et dicit,  
 qualiter ille serpens,  
 qui aspis vocatur,  
 quendam preciosissi-  
 mum lapidem nomine  
 carbunculum in sue  
 frontis medio gestans,  
 contra verba incan-  
 tantis aurem unam  
 terre affigendo pre-  
 mit et aliam sue  
 caude stimulo firmis-  
 sime obturat.

He stoppeth with his tail so sore,  
 That he the wordes lasse or more  
 Of his enchauntement ne hereth.  
 And in this wise him self he skiereth,  
 So that he hath the wordes weived  
 And thus his ere is nought deceived.

*Aliud exemplum super eodem, qualiter rex Ulixes cum a bello Trojano versus Greciam navigio remigaret et prope illa monstra maxima, Sirenes nuncupata, angelica voce canoras ipsum ventorum aduersitate navigare oporteret, omnium nautarum suorum aures obturari coegit. Et sic salutari providencia prefultus absque periculo salvus cum sua classe Ulixes pertransiit.*

An other thing who that recordeth  
 Lich unto this ensample accordeth,  
 Whiche in the tale of Troye I finde.  
 Sirenes of a wonder kinde  
 Ben monstres, as the bokes tellen,  
 And in the grete see they dwellen,  
 Of body bothe and of visage  
 Like unto women of yonge age  
 Up fro the navel on high they be,  
 And down benethe, as men may se,  
 They bere of fishes the figure.  
 And over this of such nature  
 They ben, that with so swete a steven  
 Like to the melodie of heaven  
 In womannishe vois they singe  
 With notes of so great likinge,  
 Of suche mesure, of suche musike,  
 Wherof the shippes they beswike,  
 That passen by the costes there.  
 For whan the shipmen lay an ere  
 Unto the vois, in here avis  
 They wene it be a paradis,  
 Whiche after is to hem an helle.  
 For reson may nought with hem dwelle,



Whan they the grete lustes here  
They conne nought here shippes stere,  
So befilich upon the note  
They herken and in such wise affote,  
That they here righte cours and weie  
Foryete and to their ere obeie  
And failen, till it so befalle  
That they into the perill falle,  
Where as the shippes ben to-drawe  
And they ben with the monstres slawe.  
But fro this peril netheles  
With his wisdom king Ulixes  
Escapeth and it over passeth,  
For he to-fore the hond compasseth,  
That no man of his compaignie  
Hath power unto that folie  
His ere for no lust to caste.  
For he hem stopped alle faste,  
That non of hem may here hem finge.  
So whan they comen forth sailinge,  
There was such governaunce on honde,  
That they the monstres have withstonde  
And slain of hem a great partie.  
Thus was he sauf with his navie  
This wise king through governaunce.

Herof, my sone, in remembraunce  
Thou might ensample taken here,  
As I have tolde, and what thou here  
Be wel ware and yef no credence,  
But if thou se more evidence.

Confessor.

For if thou woldest take kepe  
 And wisely coutheft warde and kepe  
 Thine eye and ere, as I have spoke,  
 Than haddest thou the gates stoke  
 Fro such folly, as cometh to winne  
 Thin hertes wit, whiche is withinne,  
 Wherof that now thy love exceedeth  
 Mesure and many a peine bredeth.  
 But if thou coutheft sette in reule  
 Tho two, the thre were eth to reule.  
 Forthy as of thy wittes five  
 I wol as nowe no more shrive,  
 But only of these ilke two,  
 Tel me therfore if it be so,  
 Hast thou thine eye nought mifthrowe?

*Amans.*      My fader ye, I am beknowe,  
 I have hem cast upon Meduse  
 Therof I may me nought excuse.  
 Min hert is growen into stone,  
 So that my lady there upon  
 Hath suche a printe of love grave,  
 That I can nought my selfe save.

*Opponit Confessor.*      What saist thou sone, as of thin ere?

*Respondet Amans.*      My fader, I am guilty of there,  
 For whanne I my lady here,  
 My wit with that hath lost his stere.  
 I do nought as Ulixes dede,  
 But falle anon upon the stede,  
 Where as I se my lady stonde.  
 And there I do you understonde

I am to-pulled in my thought,  
So that of reson leveth nought,  
Wherof that I me may defende.

My gode sone, god the amende.  
For as me thenketh by thy speche  
Thy wittes ben right far to seche.  
As of thin ere and of thin eye  
I wol no more specifie,  
But I woll axen over this  
Of other thing how that it is.

Confessor.

*Celsior est aquilaque leone forcior ille,  
Quem tumor elati cordis ad alta movet.  
Sunt species quinque, quibus esse superbia ducitrix  
Clamat et in multis mundus adheret eis.  
Larvando faciem ficto pallore subornat  
Fraudibus ypocrisis mellea verba suis.  
Sicque pios animos quam sepe ruit muliebres  
Ex humili verbo sublatitante dolo.*

5.

My sone, as I the shal enforme,  
There ben yet of another forme  
Of dedly vices seven applied,  
Wherof the herte is ofte plied  
To thing, which after shal him greve.  
The first of hem thou shalt beleve  
Is pride, whiche is principall  
And hath with him in speciall  
Ministres five ful diverse,  
Of which as I the shal reherse  
The first is said ypocrisie.  
If thou art of his compaignie  
Tel forth, my sone, and thrive the clene.

Hic loquitur, quod  
septem sunt peccata  
mortalia, quorum  
caput superbia va-  
rias species habet,  
et earum prima  
ypocrisis dicitur,  
cuius proprietatem  
secundum vicium  
simpliciter confes-  
sor amanti decla-  
rat.

I wote nought, fader, what ye mene,

Amans.



But this I wolde you beseche,  
 That ye me by somweie teche,  
 What is to ben an ypocrite.  
 And than if I be for to wite,  
 I wol beknowen, as it is.

*Confessor.* My sone, an ypocrite is this,  
 A man which feigneth conscience  
 As though it were al innocence  
 Without, and is nought so withinne,  
 And doth, so for he wolde winne  
 Of his desire the vein estate.  
 And whan he cometh anone thereat,  
 He sheweth thanne what he was,  
 The corne is torned into gras,  
 That was a rose is than a thorne,  
 And he that was a lamb beforne  
 Is than a wolfe, and thus malice  
 Under the colour of justice  
 Is had, and as the people telleth,  
*Ypocritus religiosus.* These ordres witen where he dwelleth  
 As he that of her counseil is,  
 And thilke world, which they er this  
 Forfoken, he draweth in ayeine,  
 He clotheth richesse as men saine  
 Under the simplest of pouerte  
 And doth to seme of great deserte  
 Thing, whiche is litel worth withinne,  
 He saith in open fy! to sinne,  
 And in secre there is no vice  
 Of which that he nis a norice.

And ever his chere is fobre and fofte,  
And where he goth he bleffeth ofte.  
Wherof the blinde world he drecheth,  
But yet all only he ne ftrecheth  
His reule upon religion,  
But next to that condicion  
In fuche as clepe hem holy cherche  
It fheweth eke, howe he can werche  
Amonge tho wide furred hodes  
To geten hem the worldes goodes.  
And they have felf ben thilke fame,  
That fetten moft the world in blame,  
But yet in contraire of here lore  
There is nothing they loven more,  
So that feignend of light they werke  
The dedes, whiche are inward derke,  
And thus this double ypocrisie  
With his devoute apparancie  
A vifer fet upon his face,  
Wherof toward this worldes grace  
He femeth to be right wel thewed,  
And yet his herte is all befhrewed,  
But netheles he ftant beleved  
And hath his purpos ofte acheved  
Of worfhip and of worldes welthe,  
And taketh it as who faith by ftelthe  
Through coverture of his fallas.  
And right fo in femblable cas  
This vice hath eke his officers  
Among thefe other feculers

Ypocrifis ecclefiaſtica.

Ypocrifis ſecularis.

Of grete men, for of the smale  
 As for to accompt he set no tale,  
 But they that passen the comune  
 With suche hem liketh to comune,  
 And where he saith, he wol socoure  
 The people, there he wol deuoure.  
 For now a day is many one  
 Which speketh of Peter and of John  
 And thenketh Judas in his herte,  
 There shall no worldes good asterte  
 His honde, and yet he yeveth almesse  
 And fasteth ofte and hereth messe  
 With *mea culpa*, whiche he saith,  
 Upon his brest ful ofte he leith  
 His hond and cast upward his eye,  
 As though he Cristes face seie,  
 So that it semeth ate sight,  
 As he alone al other might  
 Rescue with his holy bede.  
 But yet his herte in other stede  
 Among his bedes most devoute  
 Goth in the worldes cause aboute,  
 How that he might his warison  
 Encrese, and in comparison

Hic tractat confes-  
 sor cum amante su-  
 per illa ypocrisia,  
 que sub amoris fa-  
 cie fraudulenter la-  
 titando mulieres  
 ipsius ficticius cre-  
 dulas sepiissime de-  
 cipit innocentes.

There ben lovers of suche a sorte,  
 That feignen hem an humble porte,  
 And al is but ypocrisie,  
 Which with deceipte and flaterie  
 Hath many a worthy wife beguiled.  
 For whan he hath his tunge affiled



With softe speche and with lesinge,  
For with his fals pitous lokinge  
He wolde make a woman wene  
To gon upon the faire grene,  
Whan that she falleth in the mire.  
For if he may have his desyre,  
How so falle of the remenaunt,  
He halt no worde of covenant,  
But er the time that he spede  
There is no sleighte at thilke nede,  
Which any loves faitour may,  
That he ne put it in assay  
As him belongeth for to done.  
The colour of the reiny mone  
With medicine upon his face  
He set and than he axeth grace,  
As he, which hath likenesse feigned,  
Whan his visage is so dissteined,  
With eye up cast on her he siketh  
And many a continuaunce he piketh  
To bringen her into beleve  
Of thing, which that he wold acheve,  
Wherof he bereth the pale hewe,  
And for he wolde seme trewe  
He maketh him fike, whan he is heil.  
But whan he bereth lowest fail,  
Than is he swiftest to beguile  
The woman, which that ilke while  
Set upon him feith or credence.

My sone, if thou thy conscience

Opponit confessor.

66      *CONFESSIO AMANTIS.*

Entamed hast in fuch a wife,  
In shrifte thou the might avife  
And telle it me, if it be fo.

*Respondet amans.*

Min holy fader, certes no.  
As for to feigne fuch fikenefse  
It nedeth nought, for this witnesse  
I take of god, that my corage  
Hath ben more fike than my visage.  
And eke this may I well avowe,  
So lowe couthe I never bowe  
To feigne humilite withoute,  
That me ne lifte better loute  
With all the thoughtes of min herte.  
For that thing shall me never afterte,  
I speke as to my lady dere  
To make her any feigned chere,  
God wot well there I lie nought,  
My chere hath ben fuch as my thought.  
For in good feith, this leveth wele,  
My wil was better a thousand dele  
Than any chere that I couthe.

But fire, if I have in my youthe  
Done other wife in other place,  
I put me therof in your grace.  
For this excusen I ne shall,  
That I have elles over all  
To love and to his compaignie  
Be plein without ypocrisie.  
But there is one, the whiche I serve,  
All though I may no thank deserve,

To whom yet never unto this day  
 I saide onlich or ye or nay,  
 But if it so were in my thought  
 As touchend other say I nought,  
 That I nam somdele for to wite  
 Of that ye clepe an ypocrite.

My sone, it fit wel every wight  
 To kepe his worde in trouth upright  
 Towardes love in alle wise.  
 For who that wold him wel avise  
 What hath befall in this matere,  
 He shulde nought with feigned chere  
 Deceive love in no degre.  
 To love is every herte fre,  
 But in deceipt if that thou feignest  
 And therupon thy luste atteignest,  
 That thou hast wonne with thy wile,  
 Though it the like for a while,  
 Thou shalt it afterward repente.  
 And for to prove min entente  
 I finde ensample in a cronique  
 Of hem, that love so beswike.

It fell by olde daies thus,  
 Whil themperour Tiberius  
 The monarchie of Rome ladde,  
 There was a worthy Romain hadde  
 A wife, and she Pauline hight,  
 Which was to every mannes sight  
 Of al the cite the fairest  
 And as men saiden eke the best.

Confessor.

Quod ypocrisia sit  
 in amore periculosa,  
 narrat exemplum,  
 qualiter sub regno  
 Tiberii imperatoris  
 quidam miles nomine  
 Mundus, qui Romanorum  
 dux milicie tunc  
 prefuit, dominam  
 Paulinam pulcherrimam  
 castitatisque famosissimam  
 mediantibus duobus  
 falsis presbiteris in



templo Yfis deum se  
 fingens sub fiste sanc-  
 titatis ypoerisi noc-  
 turno tempore vicia-  
 vit, unde idem dux in  
 exilium, presbiteri in  
 mortem ob sui cri-  
 minis enormitatem  
 dampnati extiterant  
 ymagoque dee Yfis a  
 templo evulsa uni-  
 verso conclamante  
 populo in flumen Ti-  
 beriadis proiecta mer-  
 gebatur.

It is and hath ben ever yit  
 That so strong is no mannes wit,  
 Which through beaute ne may be drawe  
 To love and stonde under the lawe  
 Of thilke bore free kinde,  
 Which maketh the hertes eyen blinde,  
 Where no reson may be communed.  
 And in this wise stode fortunéd  
 This tale, of whiche I wol mene  
 This wife, whiche in her lustes grene  
 Was faire and fresfh and tender of age.  
 She may nought lette the corage  
 Of him, that wol on her assote.  
 There was a duke, and he was hote  
 Mundus, which had in his baillie  
 To lede the chivalrie  
 Of Rome and was a worthy knight.  
 But yet he was nought of such might  
 The strength of love to withstonde,  
 That he ne was so brought to honde,  
 That malgre where he wol or no  
 This yonge wife he loveth so,  
 That he hath put all his assay  
 To winne thing, which he ne may  
 Get of her graunt in no manere  
 By yeste of gold, ne by praier.  
 And whan he sigh, that by no mede  
 Toward her love he mighte spede,  
 By sleighte feignend than he wrought  
 And therupon he him bethought,

How that there was in the cite  
A temple of suche auctorite,  
To which with great devocion  
The noble women of the towne  
Most comunlich a pelerinage  
Gone for to pray thilke ymage,  
Which the goddesse of childing is  
And cleped was by name Yfis.  
And in her temple thanne were  
To reule and to ministre there  
After the lawe, which was tho,  
Above all other prestes two.  
This duke, which thought his love get,  
Upon a day hem two to mete  
Hath bede, and they come at his heste,  
Where that they had a riche feste.  
And after mete in prive place  
This lord, which wold his thank purchase,  
To eche of hem yaf thanne a yift  
And spake so by waie of shrift,  
He drough hem into his covine  
To helpe and shape, how he Pauline  
After his lust deceive might.  
And they her trouthes bothe plight,  
That they by night her shulden winne  
Into the temple, and he therinne  
Shall have of her all his entent.  
And thus accorded forth they went.  
Now list, through which ypocrisie  
Ordeigned was the trecherie,

Wherof this lady was deceived.  
 These prestes hadden wel conceived,  
 That she was of great holinesse.  
 And with a counterfeit simpleffe,  
 Which hid was in a fals corage,  
 Feignend an hevenly message  
 They cam and saide unto her thus :  
 Pauline, the god Anubus  
 Hath sent us bothe prestes here  
 And faith, he wol to the appere  
 By nightes time him selfe alone,  
 For love he hath to thy persone.  
 And therupon he hath us bede,  
 That we in Yfis temple a stede  
 Honestly for the purveie,  
 Where thou by night as we the saie  
 Of him shalt take a vision.  
 For upon thy condicion,  
 The whiche is chaste and full of feith,  
 Suche price, as he us tolde, he leith,  
 That he wol stonde of thin accorde,  
 And for to beare herof recorde  
 He sende us hider bothe two.  
 Glad was her innocence tho  
 Of suche wordes as she herd,  
 With humble chere and thus answerd  
 And saide, that the goddes will  
 She was all redy to fulfill,  
 That by her husbondes leve  
 She wolde in Yfis temple at eve



Upon her goddes grace abide  
To seruen him the nightes tide.  
The prestes tho gon home ayeine,  
And she goth to her soveraine  
Of goddes will. And as it was  
She tolde him all the plaine cas,  
Wherof he was deceived eke  
And bad, that she her shulde meke  
All hole unto the goddes heste.  
And thus she, which was all honeste  
To godward, after her entent  
At night unto the temple went,  
Where that the false prestes were.  
And they receiven her there  
With suche a token of holinesse,  
As though they seen a goddesse,  
And all within in prive place  
A softe bedde of large space  
They hadde made and encortined,  
Where she was afterward engined.  
But she, whiche all honour supposeth,  
The false prestes than opposeth  
And axeth by what observaunce  
She might most to the plesaunce  
Of god that nightes reule kepe.  
And they her bidden for to slepe  
Liggend upon the bedde a loft,  
For, so they said, al still and soft  
God Anubus her wolde awake.  
The counseil in this wise take

The prestes fro this lady gone.  
And she that wiste of guile none  
In the maner as it was said  
To slepe upon the bedde is leid,  
In hope that she sholde acheve  
Thing, which stode than upon beleve  
Fulfilled of all holinesse.  
But she hath failed as I gesse,  
For in a closet faste by  
The duke was hid so prively,  
That she him mighte nought perceive.  
And he that thoughte to deceive  
Hath fuche array upon him nome,  
That whan he wold unto her come  
It shulde semen at her eye,  
As though she verriliche seie  
God Anubus, and in fuche wise  
This ypocrite of his queintise  
Awaiteth ever til she slept.  
And than out of his place he crept  
So stille, that she nothing herde,  
And to the bed stalkend he ferde  
And sodeinly, er she it wiste,  
Beclipt in armes he her kiste,  
Wherof in womannishe drede  
She woke and niste what to rede.  
But he with softe wordes milde  
Comforteth her and faith, with childe  
He wolde her make in fuche a kinde,  
That al the world shall have in minde

The worshippe of that ilke sone,  
For he shall with the goddes wone  
And ben him selfe a god also.  
With suche wordes and with mo,  
The which he feigneth in his speche,  
This ladies wit was al to seche  
As she, which alle trouthe weneth.  
But he, that all untrouthe meneth,  
With blinde tales so her ladde,  
That all his will of her he hadde.  
And whan him thought it was inough,  
Ayein the day he him withdrough  
So prively, that she ne wiste  
Where he be come, but as him liste  
Out of the temple he goth his way.  
And she began to bid and pray,  
Upon the bare ground knelende,  
And after that made her offrende  
And to the prestes yestes great  
She yaf, and homeward by the strete  
The duke her mette and saide thus :  
The mighty god, whiche Anubus  
Is hote, he save the Pauline,  
For thou art of his discipline  
So holy, that no mannes might  
May do, that he hath do to night  
Of thing, which thou hast ever eschued.  
But I his grace have so pursued,  
That I was made his lieutenaunt.  
Forthy by way of coveNaunt



Fro this day forth I am all thine,  
And if the like to be mine  
That stant upon thin owne wille.  
She herde his tale and bare it stille  
And home she went as it befell  
Into her chambre and there she fell  
Upon her bed to wepe and crie  
And faide : O derke ypocrisie,  
Through whose dissimulation  
Of false ymagination  
I am thus wickedly deceived,  
But that I have it apperceived  
I thonke unto the goddes alle.  
For though it ones be befall  
I shall never est while that I live,  
And thilke avow to god I yive.  
And thus wepende she compleigneth  
Her faire face and all dissteigneth  
With wofull teres of her eye,  
So that upon this agonie  
Her husbonde is inne come  
And sigh how she was overcome  
With sorwe and axeth her what her eileth.  
And she with that her self beweileth  
Well more than she didde afore  
And said : alas, wifehode is lore  
In me, which whilom was honest,  
I am none other than a beste  
Nowe I defouled am of two.  
And as she mighte speake tho

Ashamed with a pitous onde,  
She tolde unto her husebonde  
The soth of all the hole tale,  
And in her speche dead and pale  
She fwouneth well nigh to the laste.  
And he her in his armes faste  
Upheld and ofte swore his oth,  
That he with her is nothing wroth,  
For wel he wot she may there nought.  
But netheles within his thought  
His hert stode in a fory plite  
And said, he wolde of that despite  
Be venged how so ever it falle,  
And send unto his frendes alle.  
And whan they were come in fere,  
He tolde hem upon this matere  
And axeth hem what was to done.  
And they avised were sone  
And said, it thought hem for the beste  
To sette first his wife in reste  
And after pleine to the king  
Upon the matter of this thing.  
Tho was his wofull wife comforted  
By alle waies and disported,  
Til that she was somdele amended.  
And thus a day or two dispended  
The thridde day she goth to pleine  
With many a worthy citezeine  
And he with many a citezeine.  
Whan themperour it herde saine

And knew the falsched of the vice,  
He said he wolde do justice.  
And first he let the prestes take,  
And for they shulde it nought forsake  
He put hem into question.  
But they of the suggestion  
Ne couthe nought a word refuse,  
But for they wold hem self excuse  
The blame upon the duke they laide.  
But there ayein the counseil saide,  
That they be nought excused so,  
For he is one and they be two  
And two have more wit than one,  
So thilke excusement was none.  
And over that was said hem eke,  
That whan men wolden vertue seke  
Men shulden it in the prestes finde,  
Their ordre is of so high a kinde,  
That they be divisers of the wey.  
Forthy if any man forswey  
Through hem, they be nought excusable,  
And thus by lawe resonable  
Among the wise juges there  
The prestes bothe dampned were,  
So that the prive trechery  
Hid under false ypocrisie  
Was thanne all openlich shewed,  
That many a man hem hath beshrewed.  
And whan the prestes weren dede,  
The temple of thilk horrible dede



They thoughten purge and thilke ymage  
Whose cause was the pelrinage  
They drowen out and also faste  
Fer into Tiber they it caste,  
Where the river it hath defied.  
And thus the temple purified  
They have of thilke horrible finne,  
Which was that time do therinne.  
Of this point such was the divise.  
But of the duke was otherwise,  
For he with love was bestad,  
His dome was nought so harde lad.  
For love put reson away  
And can nought se the righte wey.  
And by this cause he was respited,  
So that the deth him was acquitted,  
But for all that he was exiled  
For he his love had so beguiled,  
That he shall never come ayeine.  
For he that is to trouth unpleine  
He may nought failen of vengeance  
And eke to take remembraunce  
Of that ypocrisie hath wrought.  
On other half men shulde nought  
To lightly leve all that they here,  
But thanne shulde a wiseman stere  
The ship, whan suche windes blowe,  
For first though they beginne lowe,  
At ende they be nought mevable,  
But all to-broken mast and cable,

So that the ship with sodain blast  
 Whan men leste wene is overcast.  
 As now full ofte a man may se,  
 And of old time how it hath be  
 I finde a great experience,  
 Wherof to take an evidence  
 Good is and to beware also  
 Of the perill er him be woo.

Hic ulterius ponit  
 exemplum de illa  
 eciam ypocrisis, que  
 inter virum et virum  
 decipiens periculosiss-  
 sima consistit, et nar-  
 rat, qualiter Greci in  
 obsidione civitatis  
 Troie, cum ipsam vi  
 apprehendere nulla-  
 tenus potuerunt, fal-  
 laci animo cum Troi-  
 anis pacem ut dicunt  
 pro perpetuo statue-  
 bant et super hoc  
 quendam equum mi-  
 re grossionis de ere  
 fabricatum ad sacrifi-  
 candum in templo  
 Minerve confingen-  
 tes sub tali sancti-  
 tatis ypocrisis dictam  
 civitatem intrarunt  
 et ipsam cum inha-  
 bitantibus gladio et  
 igne comminuentes  
 pro perpetuo penitus  
 devastarunt.

Of hem that ben so derk withinne  
 At Troie also if we beginne,  
 Ypocrisie it hath betraied.  
 For whan the Grekes had all assaied  
 And founde that by no bataile  
 Ne by no siege it might availe  
 The town to winne through prowesse,  
 This vice feigned of simplesse  
 Through sleight of Calcas and of Crise  
 It wan by such a maner wise.  
 An horse of brasse they let do forge  
 Of suche entaile, of suche a forge,  
 That in this world was never man  
 That such an other werk began.  
 The crafty werkeman Epheus  
 It made, and for to telle thus,  
 The Grekes that thoughten to beguile  
 The king of Troie in thilke while  
 With Antenor and with Enee,  
 That were bothe of the citee  
 And of the counseil the wisest,  
 The richest and the mightiest,

In prive place so they trete  
With fair behestes and yestes grete  
Of gold, that they hem have engined  
To-gider and whan they be covined,  
They feignen for to make pees,  
And under that yet nethelès  
They shopen the destruction  
Bothe of the king and of the town.  
And thus the false pees was take  
Of hem of Grece and undertake,  
And therupon they founde a way,  
Where strengthe might nought away,  
That sleight shulde helpe thanne.  
And of an inche a large spanne  
By colour of the pees they made  
And tolden how they were glade  
Of that they stoden in accorde,  
And for it shall ben of recorde  
Unto the king the Gregois saiden  
By way of love and thus they praiden,  
As they that wolden his thank deserve,  
A sacrifice unto Minerve  
The pees to kepe in good entent  
They must offre, or that they went.  
The king counseiled in the cas  
By Antenor and Eneas  
Therto hath yoven his assent.  
So was the pleine trouthe blent  
Through counterfeit ypocrisie.  
Of that they shulden sacrifice



The Grekes under the holinesse  
 Anone with alle besinesse  
 Here hors of brās let faire dight,  
 Which was to sene a wonder fight.  
 For it was trapped of him selve  
 And had of smale wheles twelve,  
 Upon the whiche men inowe  
 With craft toward the town it drowe  
 And goth glistrend ayein the sonne.  
 Tho was there joie inough begonne,  
 For Troie in great devocion  
 Came also with proceffion  
 Ayein this noble sacrifice  
 With great honour, and in this wise  
 Unto the gates they it broughte,  
 But of here entre whan they foughte  
 The gates weren all to smale.  
 And therupon was many a tale.  
 But for the worship of Minerve,  
 To whom they comen for to serve,  
 They of the town which understood  
 That all this thing was done for good  
 For pees, wherof that they ben glade,  
 The gates that Neptunus made  
 A thousand winter ther to-fore  
 They have anone to-broke and tore,  
 The stronge walles down they bete,  
 So that into the large strete  
 This horse with great solempnite  
 Was brought withinne the cite,

And offred with great reverence,  
Which was to Troie an evidence  
Of love and pees for evermo.  
The Gregois token leve tho  
With all the hole felaship,  
And forth they wenten into ship  
And crossen sail and made hem yare  
Anone as though they wolden fare.  
But whan the blacke winter night  
Withoute mone or sterre light  
Bederked hath the water stronde,  
Al prively they gone to londe  
Full armed out of the navie.  
Simon, whiche made was here espie  
Withinne Troie, as was conspired,  
Whan time was a tokne hath fired,  
And they with that here waie holden  
And comen in right as they wolden,  
There as the gate was to-broke.  
The purpose was full take and spoke  
Er any man may take kepe,  
Whil that the citee was allepe  
They flowen al that was withinne  
And token what they mighten winne  
Of such good as was suffisaunt  
And brenden up the remenaunt.  
And thus come out the trecherie,  
Which under false ypocrisie  
Was hid, and they that wende pees  
Tho mighten finde no releefe

Of thilke swerd, whiche al devoureth.  
 Full ofte and thus the swete soureth,  
 Whan it is knowe to the taste,  
 He spilleth many a worde in waste  
 That shal with such a people trete,  
 For whan he weneth most beyete  
 Than is he shape most to lese.  
 And right so if a woman chese  
 Upon the wordes that she hereth,  
 Som man whan he most true appereth  
 Than is he furthest fro the trouthe.  
 But yet full ofte, and that is routhe,  
 They spedden, that ben most untrue  
 And loven every day a newe,  
 Wherof the life is after lothe  
 And love hath cause to be wrothe.  
 But what man that his lust desireth  
 Of love and therupon conspireth  
 With wordes feigned to deceive,  
 He shall nought faile to receive  
 His peine as it is ofte sene.

*Confessor.*      Forthy my sone, as I the mene,  
 It fit the well to taken hede,  
 That thou escheue of thy manhede  
 Ypocrisie and his semblaunt,  
 That thou ne be nought deceivaunt  
 To make a woman to beleve  
 Thing, whiche is nought in thy beleve.  
 For in suche feint ypocrisie  
 Of love is all the trecherie,



Through which love is deceived ofte.  
 For feigned semblaunt is so softe,  
 Unnethes love may be ware.  
 Forthy my sone, as I well dare,  
 I charge the to flee that vice,  
 That many a woman hath made nice,  
 But loke thou dele nought with all.  
 Iwis my fader, no more I shall.

Amans.

Now sone kepe, that thou hast swore.  
 For this that thou hast herd before  
 Is said the first point of pride.  
 And next upon that other side  
 To thrive and speken over this  
 Touchend of pride yet there is  
 The point seconde I the behote,  
 Which inobedience is hote.

Confessor.

*Flectere quam frangi melius reputatur, et olle  
 Fiētilis ad cacabum pugna valere nequit.  
 Quem neque lex hominum, neque lex divina valebit  
 Flectere, multociens corde reflectit amor.  
 Quem non flectit amor, non est flectendus ab ullo,  
 Sed rigor illius plus elephante riget.  
 Dignatur amor poterit quos scire rebelles,  
 Et rudibus sortem prestat habere rudem.  
 Sed qui sponte sui subicit se cordis amori,  
 Frangit in adversis omnia fata pius.*

6.

This vice of inobedience  
 Ayein the reule of conscience  
 All that is humble he disalloweth,  
 That he toward his god ne boweth  
 After the lawes of his heste.  
 Nought as a man, but as a beste

Hic loquitur de secunda specie superbie, que inobediencia dicitur. Et primo illius vicii naturam simpliciter declarat et tractat subsequenter super illa inobediencia, que in

curia Cupidinis  
exosa amoris cau-  
sam ex sua imbe-  
cillitate sepiissime  
retardat, in cuius  
materia confessor  
amanti specialius  
opponit.

Whiche goth upon his lustes wilde  
So goth this proude vice unmilde,  
That he disdeigneth alle lawe.  
He not what is to be felawe  
And serue he may nought for pride.  
So is he ledde on every side  
And is that selve, of whom men speke,  
Which woll nought bowe, er that he breke.  
I not if love him might plie,  
For elles for to justifie  
His herte, I not what might auaile.

Confessor. Forthy my sone, of suche entaile  
If that thin herte be disposed,  
Telle out and let it nought be glosed.  
For if that thou unbuxome be  
To love, I not in what degre  
Thou shalt thy good worde acheue.

Amans. My fader, ye shal well beleve,  
The yonge whelpe, which is affaited,  
Hath nought his maister better awaited  
To couche, whan he saith go lowe,  
Than I anone, as I may knowe  
My lady will me bowe more.  
But other while I grucche fore  
Of some thinges, that she doth,  
Wherof that I woll telle soth.  
For of two pointes I am bethought,  
That though I wolde I might nought  
Obeie unto my ladies hest,  
But I dare make this behest

Sauf only of that ilke two,  
I am unbuxome of no mo.  
What ben tho two, tell on, quod he.  
My fader, this is one, that she  
Commaundeth me my mouthe to close,  
And that I shulde her nought oppose  
In love, of whiche I ofte preche,  
And plenerlich of suche a speche  
Forbere and suffre her in pees.  
But that ne might I netheles  
For all this worlde obey iwis.  
For whan I am there as she is,  
Though she my tales nought allowe,  
Ayein her will yet mote I bowe  
To seche, if that I might have grace.  
But that thing may I nought embrace  
For ought that I can speke or do.  
And yet full ofte I speke so,  
That she is wroth and saith : be stille.  
If I that heste shall fulfille  
And therto ben obedient,  
Than is my cause fully shent,  
For specheles may no man spede.  
So wote I nought what is to rede.  
But certes I may nought obeie,  
That I ne mote algate saie  
Some what of that I wolde mene,  
For ever it is a liche grene  
The great love which I have,  
Wherof I can nought bothe save

Opponit confessor.

Respondet amans.



My ſpeche and this obedience.  
 And thus full ofte my ſilence  
 I breke, and is the firſt point  
 Wherof that I am out of point  
 In this, and yet it is no pride.

Now than upon that other ſide  
 To tell my diſobeiſaunce,  
 Full ſore it ſtant to my grevaunce  
 And may nought ſinke into my wit.  
 Full ofte time ſhe me bit  
 To leven her and cheſe a newe  
 And ſaith, if I the ſothe knewe  
 How fer I ſtonde from her grace,  
 I ſhulde love in other place.  
 But therof wol I diſobeie  
 For alſo wel ſhe mighte ſaie :  
 Go take the mone there it fit,  
 As bringe that into my wit.  
 For there was never rooted tree  
 That ſtood ſo faſte in his degree,  
 That I ne ſtonde more faſte  
 Upon her love and may nought caſte  
 Min herte away, all though I wolde.  
 For god wote though I never ſholde  
 Sene her with eye after this daie,  
 Yet ſtant it ſo, that I ne maie  
 Her love out of my breſt remue.  
 \* This is a wonder retenue,  
 That malgre where ſhe woll or none  
 Min herte is evermo in one,

So that I can none other chese,  
 But whether that I winne or lese  
 I must her loven till I deie  
 And thus I breke as by that weie  
 Her hestes and her commaundinges.  
 But trulich in none other thinges.  
 Forthy my fader, what is more  
 Touchende of this ilke lore  
 I you beseche after the forme,  
 That ye plainly me wolde enforme,  
 So that I may min herte reule  
 In loves cause after the reule.

*Murmur in adversis ita concipit ille superbus,  
 Pena quod ex bina sorte purget eum.  
 O bina fortune cum spes in amore resistit,  
 Non sine mentali murmure plangit amans.*

7.

Toward this vice of which we trete  
 There ben yet tweie of thilke estrete,  
 Her name is murmur and compleinte.  
 Ther can no man her chere peinte.  
 To sette a glad semblaunt therinne,  
 For though fortune make hem winne,  
 Yet grucchen they, and if they lese  
 There is no waie for to chese,  
 Wherof they mighten stonde appesed.  
 So ben they comunly disesed,  
 There may no welth ne pouerte  
 Attempren hem to the deserte  
 Of buxomnesse by no wise.  
 For ofte time they despise

Hic loquitur de  
 murmure et planctu,  
 qui super omnes  
 alios inobediencie  
 secreciores ut ministri  
 illi deserviunt.

The good fortune as the badde,  
 As they no mannes reson hadde  
 Through pride, wherof they be blinde.  
 And right of such a maner kinde  
 Ther be lovers, that though they have  
 Of love all that they wolde crave,  
 Yet woll they grucche by some weie,  
 That they wol nought to love obeie  
 Upon the trouth, as they do sholde.  
 And if hem lacketh that they wolde,  
 Anon they falle in such a peine,  
 That ever unbuxomly they pleine  
 Upon fortune and curse and crie,  
 That they wol nought her hertes plie  
 To suffre, till it better falle.  
 Forthy if thou amonges alle  
 Hast used this condicion,  
 My sone, in thy confession  
 Now tell me plainly what thou art.

Amans.

My fader, I beknowe a part  
 So as ye tolden here above  
 Of murmur and compleint of love,  
 That for I se no spede comende  
 Ayein fortune compleignende  
 I am as who faith evermo  
 And eke full ofte time also.  
 Whan so as that I se or here  
 Of hevy word or hevy chere  
 Of my lady, I grucche anone,  
 But wordes dare I speke none,



Wherof ſhe mighte be diſpleſed.  
 But in min herte I am diſeſed  
 With many a murmur god it wote,  
 Thus drinke I in min owne ſwote.  
 And though I make no ſemblaunt,  
 Min herte is all diſobeiſaunt,  
 And in this wiſe I me confeſſe  
 Of that ye clepe unbuxomneſſe.  
 Now telleth what your counſeil is.

My ſone, as I the rede this,  
 What ſo befall of other weie,  
 That thou to loves heſt obeie  
 Als fer as thou it might ſuffiſe.  
 For ofte ſith in ſuch a wiſe  
 Obedience in love availeth,  
 Where all a mannes ſtrengthe faileth,  
 Wherof if that the liſt to wit  
 In a cronique as it is writ  
 A great enſample thou might finde,  
 Which now come is to my minde.

There was whilom by daies olde  
 A worthy knight and as men tolde  
 He was neveu to themperour  
 And of his court a courteour.  
Wifeles he was, Florent he hight,  
 He was a man, that mochel might.  
 Of armes he was deſirous,  
 Chivalerous and amorous,  
 And for the fame of worldes ſpeche  
 Straunge adventures for to ſeche

Confefſor.

Hic contra amori in-  
 obedientes ad com-  
 mendacionem obedi-  
 encie confefſor ſuper  
 eodem exemplum  
 ponit, ubi dicit, quod  
 cum quidam regis  
 Sicilie filia in ſue ju-  
 ventutis floribus pul-  
 cherrima ex eius no-  
 verce incantacionibus  
 in vetulam turpiſſi-  
 mam transformata  
 extitit, Florencius  
 tunc imperatoris  
 Claudii nepos, miles  
 in armis ſtrenuiſſimus  
 amorofique legibus

intendens ipsam ex  
sua obediencia in pul-  
chritudinem pristi-  
nam mirabiliter re-  
formavit.

He rode the marches all aboute.  
And fell a time as he was oute  
Fortune, which may every threde  
To-breke and knitte of mannes spede,  
Shope, as this knight rode in a pas,  
That he by strengthe taken was,  
And to a castell they him ladde,  
Where that he fewe frendes hadde.  
For so it fell that ilke stounde,  
That he hath with a dedly wounde  
Fightend his owne hondes slain  
Branchus, whiche to the Capitain  
Was sone and heire, wherof ben wrothe  
The fader and the moder bothe.  
That knight Branchus was of his honde  
The worthiest of all his londe,  
And fain they wolden do vengeance  
Upon Florent, but remembraunce  
That they toke of his worthinesse,  
Of knighthode and of gentilesse,  
And how he stood of cousinage  
To themperour, made hem assuage,  
And dorste nought slaine him for fere.  
In great desputeson they were  
Among hem selfe, that was the best.  
There was a lady, the fliest  
Of alle that men knewen tho,  
So olde she might unnethes go,  
And was graunt dame to the dede.  
And she with that began to rede

And faide hem ſhe wol bring him inne,  
That ſhe ſhal him to deth winne  
All only of his owne graunt  
Through ſtrength of verray covenaut  
Withoute blame of any wight.  
Anone ſhe ſende for this knight  
And of her ſone ſhe alleide  
The deth and thus to him ſhe faide :  
Florent, how ſo ever thou be to wite  
Of Branchus deth, men ſhal respite  
As now to take vengeance,  
Be ſo thou ſtonde in jugement  
Upon certein condicion,  
That thou unto a queſtion  
Which I ſhall axe ſhalt anſwere.  
And over this thou ſhalt eke ſwere,  
That if thou of the ſothe faile,  
There ſhal non other thinge availe,  
That thou ne ſhalt thy deth receive,  
And for men ſhal the nought deceive  
That thou therof might ben aviſed,  
Thou ſhalt have day and time aſſiſed  
And leve ſauſly for to wende,  
Be ſo that at thy daies ende  
Thou come ayein with thin aviſe.  
| This knight, which worthy was and wiſe,  
This lady praieth, that he may wit  
And have it under ſeales writ,  
What queſtion it ſholde be  
For which he ſhall in that degre



Stonde of his life in jeopartie.  
 With that she feigneth compaignie  
 And faith: Florent, on love it hongeth  
 All that to min axinge longeth,  
 What all women most desire  
 This woll I axe, and in thempire  
 Where thou hast moste knowleching  
 Take counseil of this axinge.  
 Florent this thing hath undertake,  
 The day was set and time take,  
 Under his seale he wrote his othe  
 In such a wise, and forth he gothe  
 Home to his emes courte ayein,  
 To whom his aventure plein  
 He tolde, of that is him befall.  
 And upon that they weren alle  
 The wisest of the londe assent,  
 But netheles of one assent  
 They might nought accomde plat,  
 One faide this, an other that  
 After the disposition  
 Of natural complexion  
 To some woman it is plesauce,  
 That to another is grevaunce.  
 But suche a thinge in speciall  
 Whiche to hem alle in generall  
 Is most plesant and most desired  
 Above all other and most conspired,  
 Suche o thing conne they nought finde  
 By constellation ne kinde.

And thus Florent withoute cure  
Mot stonde upon his aventure  
And is al shape unto the lere,  
And as in defaulte of his answere  
This knight hath lever for to deie  
Than breke his trowth and for to lie  
In place where he was swore,  
And shapeth him gone ayein therfore.

Whan time cam he toke his leve  
That lenger wolde he nought beleve  
And praieth his eme he be nought wroth,  
For that is a point of his oth,  
He saith, that no man shal him wreke,  
Though afterward men here speke  
That he peraventure deie.

And thus he went forth his weie  
Alone as a knight adventurous  
And in his thought was curious  
To wit, what was best to do.  
And as he rode alone so  
And cam nigh there he wolde be,  
In a forest there under a tree  
He sigh where sat a creature,  
A lothly womannissh figure,  
That for to speke of fleshe and bone  
So foule yet sigh he never none.  
This knight behelde her redily,  
And as he wolde have passed by  
She cleped him and bad abide.  
And he his hors heved aside,

Tho torned and to her he rode  
 And there he hoved and abode  
 To wit what she wolde mene.  
 And she began him to bemene  
 And said: Florent, by thy name  
 Thou hast on honde such a game  
 That but thou be the better avised  
 Thy deth is shapen and devised,  
 That al the world ne may the save,  
 But if that thou my counseil have.  
 Florent whan he this tale herde,  
 Unto this olde wight answerde  
 And of her counseil he her praide.  
 And she ayein to him thus saide:  
 Florent, if I for the so shape,  
 That thou through me thy deth escape  
 And take worship of thy dede,  
 What shall I have to my mede?  
 What thing, quod he, that thou wolde axe.  
 I bid never a better taxe,  
 Quod she, but first, or thou be sped,  
 Thou shalt me leve suche a wed,  
 That I woll have thy trouth on honde,  
 That thou shalt be min husebonde.  
 Nay, faith Florent, that may nought be.  
 Ride thanne forth thy way, quod she,  
 And if thou go withoute rede,  
 Thou shalt be sekerlich dede.  
 Florent behight her good inough  
 Of londe, of rent, of parke, of plough,



But all that compteth she at nought.  
Tho fell this knight in mochel thought,  
Now goth he forth, now cometh ayein,  
He wot nought what is best to fain  
And thought as he rode to and fro,  
That chese he mote one of the two  
Or for to take her to his wife  
Or elles for to lese his life.  
And than he caste his avauntage,  
That she was of so great an age  
That she may live but a while,  
And thought to put her in an ile,  
Where that no man her shulde knowe  
Til she with deth were overthrowe.  
And thus this yonge lusty knight  
Unto this olde lothly wight  
Tho said: if that none other chaunce  
May make my deliveraunce  
But only thilke same speche  
Which as thou faist thou shalt me teche,  
Have here min honde, I shal the wedde.  
And thus his trouth he leith to wedde.  
With that she frounceth up the browe:  
This covenant woll I allowe,  
She faith, if any other thing  
But that thou haste of my teching  
Fro deth thy body may respite,  
I woll the of thy trouth acquite  
And elles by none other waie.  
Now herken me what I shall saie:

Whan thou art come into the place,  
 Where now they maken great manace  
 And upon thy coming abide,  
 They wol anone the same tide  
 Oppose the of thine answere.  
 I wot thou wolt no thing forbere  
 Of that thou weneſt be thy beſte,  
 And if thou might ſo finde reſte  
 Wel is, for than is ther no more.  
 And elles this ſhall be my lore,  
 That thou ſhalt ſaie : upon this molde  
 That alle women leueſt wolde  
 Be ſoverein of mannes love,  
 For what woman is ſo above  
 She hath as who ſaith all her wille,  
 And elles may ſhe nought fulfille  
 What thinge her were leueſt have.  
 With this answere thou ſhalt ſave  
 Thy ſelf and other wiſe nought.  
 And whan thou haſt thy ende wrought,  
 Come here ayein, thou ſhalt me finde,  
 And let nothinge out of thy minde.  
 He goth him forth with hevy chere,  
 As he that not in what manere  
 He may this worldes joie atteigne.  
 For if he deie he hath a peine,  
 And if he live he mote him binde  
 To ſuche one, which of alle kinde  
 Of women is the unfemlieſte.  
 Thus wot he nought what is the beſte.

But be him lief or be him loth  
Unto the castel forth he goth  
His full answere for to yive  
Or for to deie or for to live.  
Forth with his counfeil came the lorde,  
The thinges stoden of recorde,  
He send up for the lady sone,  
And forth she cam that olde mone.  
In prefence of the remenaunt  
The strengthe of all the covenaut  
Tho was reherfed openly,  
And to Florent she bad forthy,  
That he shall tellen his avise  
As he that wot what is the prise.  
Florent faith all that ever he couth,  
But such word cam ther none to mouth,  
That he for yefte or for beheste  
Might any wise his deth areste.  
And thus he tarieth longe and late,  
Til that this lady bad algate  
That he shall for the dome finall  
Yef his answere in speciall  
Of that she had him first opposed.  
And than he hath truly supposed,  
That he him may of nothing yelpe,  
But if so by tho wordes helpe,  
Which as the woman hath him taught,  
Wherof he hath an hope caught  
That he shall be excused so.  
And tolde out plein his wille tho.



And whan that this matrone herde  
 The maner how this knight answerde,  
 She said : ha trefon, wo the be,  
 That hast thus tolde the prívete,  
 Whiche alle women most desire,  
 I wolde that thou were a fire.  
 But netheles in suche a plite  
 Florent of his answer is quite.  
 And tho began his sorwe newe,  
 For he mot gone or ben untrewē  
 To her, which his trouthe hadde.  
 But he, which al shame dradde,  
 Goth forth in stede of his penaunce  
 And taketh the fortune of his chaunce  
 As he, that was with trouthe affaited.  
 This olde wight him hath awaited  
 In place where as he her lefte.  
 Florent his wofull hed up lifte  
 And sigh this vecke where that she sat,  
 Which was the lothliest what,  
 That ever man cast on his eye.  
 Her nase bas, her browes high,  
 Her eyen smal and depe set,  
 Her chekes ben with teres wet  
 And revelin as an empty skin  
 Hangend down unto the chin,  
 Her lippes shrunkē ben for age,  
 There was no grace in her visage,  
 Her front was narwe, her lockes hore,  
 She loketh forth as doth a more,

Her necke is short, her sholders courbe,  
 That might a mannes lust distourbe  
 Her body great and no thing small,  
 And shortly to describe her all  
 She hath no lith without a lack,  
 But liche unto the wolfe sack  
 She profreth her unto this knight  
 And bad him, as he hath behight  
 So as she hath by his warrant,  
 That he her holde covenant.  
 And by the bridell she him sefeth,  
 But god wot how that she him pleseth,  
 Of such wordes as she speket  
 Him thenketh wel nigh his herte breketh  
 For sorwe, that he may nought fle,  
 But if he wolde untrew be.

- ~ Loke, how a seke man for his hele  
 Taketh baldemoin with canele  
 And with the mirre taketh the sucre,  
 Right upon such a maner lucre  
 Stant Florent, as in this diete  
 He drinketh the bitter with the swete,  
 He medleth sorwe with liking  
 And liveth so as who saith dying.  
 His youthe shall be cast away  
 Upon suche one, which as the wey  
 Is olde and lothly overall.  
 But nede he mot that nede shall  
 He wolde algate his trouthe holde  
 As every knight therto is holde

What hap so him is ever befall,  
 Though she be the foulest of alle,  
 Yet to thonour of womanhed  
 Him thought he shulde taken heed,  
 So that for pure gentileffe,  
 As he her couthe best adresse  
 In ragges, as she was to-tore,  
 He set her on his hors to-fore  
 And forth he taketh his way softe.  
 No wonder though he siketh ofte.  
 But as an oule fleeth by nighte  
 Out of all other briddes fighte,  
 Right so this knight on daies brode  
 In close him held and shope his rode  
 On nightes time, till the tide  
 That he come there he wolde abide  
 And prively withoute noise  
 He bringeth this foule great coise  
 To his castell in suche a wise,  
 That no man might her shape avise,  
 Til she into the chambre came,  
 Where he his prive counseil name  
 Of suche men as he most truste  
 And told hem, that he nedes muste  
 This beste wedde to his wife,  
 For elles had he lost his life.  
 The prive women were assent,  
 That sholden ben of his assent.  
 Her ragges they anone of drawe  
 And as it was that time lawe



She hadde bath, she hadde rest  
And was arraied to the best.  
But with no craft of combes brode  
They might her hore lockes shode,  
And she ne wolde nought be shone  
For no counseil, and they therfore  
With fuche attire as tho was used  
Ordeinen, that it was excused,  
And had so craftilich aboute,  
That no man mighte seen hem oute.  
But whan she was fullich arraied  
And her attire was all assaied,  
Tho was she fouler unto se.  
But yet it may non other be  
They were wedded in the night,  
So wo begone was never knight  
As he was than of mariage.  
And she began to pleie and rage  
As who saith, I am well inough,  
But he therof nothing ne lough.  
For she toke thanne chere on honde  
And clepeth him her husebonde  
And saith: My lord, go we to bedde,  
For I to that entente wedde,  
That thou shalt be my worldes blisse.  
And profreth him with that to kisse,  
As she a lusty lady were.  
His body mighte well be there,  
But as of thought and memoire  
His hert was in purgatoire.

But yet for strengthe of matrimonie  
 He might make non effonie,  
 That he ne mote algates plie  
 To gon to bed of compaignie.  
 And whan they were a bedde naked  
 Withoute slepe he was awaked,  
 He torneth on that other side  
 For that he wolde his eyen hide  
 Fro loking of that foule wight.  
 The chamber was all full of light,  
 The courtines were of sendall thinne,  
 This newe bride, which lay withinne,  
 Though it be nought with his accorde  
 In armes she beclept her lorde  
 And praid, as he was torned fro  
 He wolde him torne ayeinward tho.  
 For now, she saith, we be both one.  
 But he lay stille as any stone,  
 And ever in one she spake and praide  
 And bad him thenke on that he saide,  
 Whan that he toke her by the honde.  
 He herd and understood the bonde,  
 How he was set to his penaunce.  
 And as it were a man in traunce  
 He torneth him all sodeinly  
 And figh a lady lay him by  
 Of eightene winter age,  
 Which was the fairest of visage,  
 That ever in all this world he figh.  
 And as he wolde have take her nigh,

She put her hond and by his leve  
Besought him, that he wolde leve,  
And faith, that for to winne or lese  
He mot one of two thinges chese,  
Where he woll have her such on night  
Or elles upon daies light,  
For he shall nought have bothe two.  
And he began to forwe tho  
In many a wise and caste his thought,  
But for al that yet couth he nought  
Devise him self, which was the best.  
And she that wolde his hertes rest  
Praieth, that he shulde chese algate,  
Til at the laste longe and late  
He saide : O, ye my lives hele,  
Say what ye liste in my quarele.  
I not what answere I shall yive,  
But ever while that I may live  
I woll, that ye be my maistresse,  
For I can nought my selfe gesse,  
Which is the best unto my chois,  
Thus graunt I you min hole vois,  
Chese for us bothe, I you praie,  
And what as ever that ye saie,  
Right as ye wolle so woll I.  
My lord, she saide, grauntmercy,  
For of this word that ye now sain  
That ye have made me soverain  
My destine is overpassed,  
That never here after shall be lassed



My beaute, which that I now have,  
 Til I be take into my grave.  
 Both night and day as I am now  
 I shall all way be such to you,  
The kinges daughter of Cecile  
 I am, and fell but fith a while,  
 As I was with my fader late,  
 That my stepmoder for an hate,  
 Which toward me she hath begonne,  
 Forshope me, till I hadde wonne  
 The love and the fovereinte  
 Of what knight, that in his degre  
 All other passeth of good name.  
 And as men sain ye ben the same  
 The dede proveth it is so,  
 Thus am I youres evermo.  
 Tho was plesaunce and joie inough,  
 Echone with other pleid and lough,  
 They live longe and well they ferde,  
 And clerkes, that this chaunce herde,  
 They writen it in evidence  
 To teche, how that obedience  
May well fortune a man to love  
And set him in his luste above  
As it befell unto this knight.

*Confessor.* Forthy, my sone, if thou do right,  
 Thou shalt unto thy love obeie  
 And folwe her will by alle weie.

*Amans.* Min holy fader, so I will.  
 For ye have told me such a skill

Of this ensample now to-fore,  
 That I shall evermo therfore  
 Here afterward min observaunce  
 To love and to his obeissaunce  
 The better kepe, and over this  
 Of pride if there ought elles is,  
 Wherof that I me thrive shall,  
 What thing it is in speciall,  
 My fader, axeth I you pray.  
 Now list, my sone, and I shall say.  
 For yet there is surquedrie,  
 Which stant with pride of compaignie,  
 Wherof that thou shalt here anone  
 To knowe if thou have gult or none,  
 Upon the forme as thou shalt here  
 Now understond well the matere.

Confessor.

*Omnia scire putat, sed se presumpcio nescit,  
 Nec sibi consimile quem putat esse parem.  
 Qui magis astutus reputat se vincere bellum,  
 In laqueos Veneris forcius ipse cadit.  
 Sepe Cupido virum, sibi qui presumit, amantem  
 Fallit, et in vacuas spes redit ipsa vias.*

8.

Surquedrie is thilke vice  
 Of pride, which the third office  
 Hath in his court and wol nought knowe  
 The trouthe till it overthrowe.  
 Upon his fortune and his grace  
 Cometh *had I wist* full ofte a place,  
 For he doth all his thing by gesse  
 And voideth alle sikernesse,  
 None other counseil good him semeth  
 But such as he him selfe demeth.

Hic loquitur de  
 tercia specie super-  
 bie, que presump-  
 cio dicitur, cuius  
 naturam primo se-  
 cundum vicium  
 confessor simplici-  
 ter declarat.

For in such wise as he compasseth  
 His wit alone all other passeth  
 And is with pride so through fought,  
 That he all other set at nought  
 And weneth of him selven so,  
 That such as he there be no mo  
 So fair, so semely ne so wise,  
 And thus he wolde beare a prise  
 Above all other, and nought forthy  
 He saith nought ones graunt mercy  
 To god, which alle grace sendeth,  
 So that his wittes he despendeth  
 Upon him selfe, as though there were  
 No god, which might availe there.  
 But all upon his owne wit  
 He stant, till he fall in the pit  
 So fer, that he may nought arise.

Hic tractat confessor cum amante  
 super illa saltem  
 presumptione, ex  
 cuius superbia  
 quam plures fatui  
 amantes, cum ma-  
 joris certitudinis in  
 amore spem sibi  
 promittunt, in-  
 pediti citius desti-  
 tuuntur.

And right thus in the same wise  
 The vice upon the cause of love  
 So proudly set the hert above  
 And doth him plainly for to wene,  
 That he to loven any quene  
 Hath worthinesse and suffisaunce.  
 And so withoute purveiaunce  
 Full ofte he heweth up so highe,  
 That chippes fallen in his eye,  
 And eke full ofte he weneth this,  
 There as he nought beloved is  
 To be beloved altherbeste.  
 Now, sone, telle what so the leste



Of this, that I have told the here.

Ha fader, be nought in a were.

Amans.

I trowe there be no man lesse

Of any maner worthinesse,

That halt him lesse worthy than I

To be beloved, and nought forthy

I say in excusing of me

To alle men, that love is fre.

And certes that may no man werne.

For love is of him felfe so derne,

It luteth in a mannes herte.

But that ne shall me nought asterte

To wene for to be worthy

To loven, but in her mercy.

But fir, of that ye wolde mene,

That I shulde other wise wene

To be beloved than I was,

I am beknowe as in this cas.

My gode sone, telle me how.

Confessor.

Now list, and I woll telle you,

Amans.

My gode fader, how it is.

Full ofte it hath befalle er this

Through hope, that was nought certein,

My wening hath be set in vein

To trust in thing, that helpe me nought

But onlich of min owne thought.

For as it semeth, that a bell

Like to the wordes that men tell

Answereth right so no more ne lesse

To you, my fader, I confesse.

Such will my wit hath over set,  
 That what so hope me behet  
 Full many a time I wene it soth,  
 But finally no spede it doth.  
 Thus may I tellen, as I can,  
 Wening beguileth many a man.  
 So hath it me, right wel I wot,  
 For if a man wol in a bote  
 Whiche is withoute botme rowe,  
 He must nedes overthowe.  
 Right so wening hath fard by me.  
 For whan I wende next have be,  
 As I by my wening caste,  
 Than was I furthest ate laste,  
 And as a fool my bowe unbende  
 Whan all was failed that I wende.  
 Forthy, my fader, as of this  
 That my wening hath gone amis  
 Touchend to surquedrie,  
 Yef me my penaunce or I die.  
 But if ye wolde in any forme  
 Of this mater a tale enforme,  
 Which were ayein this vice set,  
 I shulde fare well the bet.

Hic ponit confessor  
 exemplum contra istos,  
 qui suis viribus  
 presumptus debiliores  
 efficiuntur. Et  
 narrat, qualiter ille  
 Capaneus miles in  
 armis probatissimus  
 de sua presumens au-  
 dacia invocacionem

My sone, in alle maner wise  
 Surquedrie is to despise,  
 Wherof I finde write thus.  
 The proude knight Capaneus  
 He was of suche surquedrie,  
 That he through his chivalrie

Upon him self so mochel triste,  
 That to the goddes him ne liste  
 In no quarele to beseche,  
 But saide, it was an idel speche,  
 Which cause was of pure drede  
 For lacke of hert and for no nede.  
 And upon such presumption  
 He held this proude opinion,  
 Till ate laste upon a day  
 Aboute Thebes, where he lay,  
 Whan it of siege was belaine,  
 This knight, as the croniques saine,  
 In alle mannes fighte there,  
 Whan he was proudest in his gere  
 And thought how nothing might him dere,  
 Full armed with his shield and spere  
 As he the cite wolde assaile,  
 God toke him selfe the bataile  
 Ayein his pride, and fro the sky  
 A firy thonder sodeinly  
 He sende and him to pouder smote.  
 And thus the pride, which was hote,  
 Whan he most in his strengthe wende,  
 Was brent and lost withouten ende.  
 So that it proveth well therfore  
 The strength of man is sone lore,  
 But if that he it well governe.  
 And over this a man may lerne,  
 That eke full ofte time it greveth  
 What that a man him self beleveth,

ad superos tempore  
 necessitatis ex vecor-  
 dia tamen et non aliter  
 primitus provenisse  
 asseruit, unde in ob-  
 sitione civitatis The-  
 barum, cum ipse quo-  
 dam die coram suis  
 hostibus ad debellan-  
 dum se obtulit, ignis  
 de celo subito super-  
 veniens ipsum arma-  
 tum totaliter in cine-  
 res combussit.



As though it shulde him well beseme,  
 That he all other men can deme  
 And hath foryete his owne vice.  
 A tale of hem that be so nice  
 And feigne hem self to be so wise  
 I shall the telle in suche a wise,  
 Wherof thou shalt ensample take,  
 That thou no such thing undertake.

Hic loquitur confessor  
 contra illos, qui de sua  
 sciencia presumentes  
 aliorum condiciones  
 dijudicantes indiscre-  
 te redarguunt, et  
 narrat exemplum de  
 quodam principe re-  
 gis Hungarie germa-  
 no, qui cum fratrem  
 suum pauperibus in  
 publico vidit humi-  
 liatum, ipsum redar-  
 guendo in contrarium  
 edocere presumebat,  
 sed rex omni sapiencia  
 prepollens ipsum sic  
 incaute presumensem  
 ad humilitatis memo-  
 riam terribili provi-  
 dencia micus castiga-  
 vit.

I finde upon surquedrie,  
 How that whilom of Hungarie  
 By olde daies was a king  
 Wife and honest in alle thing.  
 And so befell upon a daie  
 And that was in the month of may,  
 As thilke time it was usaunce,  
 This king with noble purveiaunce  
 Hath for him selfe his chare arraied,  
 Wherin he wolde ride amaied  
 Out of the cite for to pleie  
 With lordes and with great nobleie  
 Of lusty folk that were yonge,  
 Where some pleide and some songe  
 And some gone and some ride  
 And some prick her horse aside  
 And bridlen hem now in now oute.  
 The kinge his eye cast aboute,  
 Til he was ate laste ware  
 And sigh comend ayein his chare  
 Two pilgrimes of so great age,  
 That lich unto a drie ymage,

That weren pale and fade hewed,  
And as a bushe, whiche is besnewed,  
Here berdes weren hore and white.  
There was of kinde but a lite,  
That they ne semen fully dede.  
They comen to the king and bede  
Some of his good pur charite.  
And he with great humilite  
Out of his chare to grounde lepte  
And hem in both his armes kepte  
And kist hem bothe foot and honde  
Before the lordes of his londe  
And yaf hem of his good therto.  
And whan he hath this dede do  
He goth into his chare ayeine.  
Tho was murmur, tho was disdeine,  
Tho was compleinte on every side,  
They saiden of their owne pride  
Echone till other : what is this ?  
Our king hath do this thing amis  
So to abesse his roialte,  
That every man it mighte se,  
And humbled him in such a wise  
To hem that were of none emprise.  
Thus was it spoken to and fro  
Of hem, that were with him tho  
All prively behinde his backe.  
But to him selfe no man spake.  
The kinges brother in presence  
Was thilke time and great offence

He toke therof and was the same  
Above all other, which moste blame  
Upon his lege lord hath laid  
And hath unto the lordes said,  
Anone as he may time finde,  
There shall nothing be left behinde,  
That he wol speke unto the king.  
Now list what fell upon this thing.  
The weder was merie and fair inough,  
Echone with other pleid and lough  
And fellen into tales newe,  
How that the freshe floures grewe,  
And how the grene leues spronge,  
And how that love amonge the yonge  
Began the hertes thanne awake,  
And every brid hath chose his make.  
And thus the maies day to thende  
They lede and home ayein they wende.  
The king was nought so sone come,  
That whan he had his chambre nome,  
His brother ne was redy there  
And brought a tale unto his ere  
Of that he didde such a shame  
In hindring of his owne name,  
Whan he him selfe wolde dreche,  
That to so vile a pouer wrecche  
Him deigneth shewe such simpleffe  
Ayein the state of his noblesse.  
And saith, he shall it no more use  
And that he mot him selfe excuse



Toward his lordes everichone.  
The king stood still as any stone  
And to his tale an ere he laide  
And thought more than he saide.  
But netheles to that he herde  
Well curteisly the king answerde  
And tolde, it shulde ben amended.  
And thus whan that here tale is ended,  
All redy was the bord and cloth,  
The king unto his souter goth  
Among the lordes to the halle.  
And whan they hadde souped alle,  
They token leve and forth they go.  
The king bethought him selfe tho,  
How he his brother may chastie,  
That he through his surquedrie  
Toke upon honde to dispreise  
Humilite, which is to preise,  
And therupon yaf such counseil  
Toward his king, that was nought heil,  
Wherof to be the better lered  
He thinketh to make him afered.

It fell so, that in thilke dawne  
There was ordeigned by the lawe  
A trompe with a sterne breth,  
Which was cleped the trompe of deth.  
And in the court, where the king was,  
A certein man this trompe of brasse  
Hath in keping and therof serveth,  
That whan a lord his deth deserveth,

He shall this dredfull trompe blowe  
To-fore his gate and make it knowe,  
How that the jugement is yive  
Of deth, which shall nought be foryive.  
The king whan it was night anone  
This man assent and bad him gone  
To trompen at his brothers gate.  
And he, which mot so done algate,  
Goth forth and doth the kinges heft.  
This lord, which herde of this tempest,  
That he to-fore his gate blewe,  
Tho wist he by the lawe and knewe,  
That he was sekerlich dede.  
And as of helpe he wist no rede,  
But sende for his frendes all  
And tolde hem how it is befall.  
And they him axe cause why,  
But he the sothe nought forthy  
Ne wist, and there was forwe tho.  
For it stood thilke time so,  
This trompe was of such sentence,  
That there ayein no resistence  
They couthe ordeine by no weie,  
That he ne mot algate deie,  
But if so that he may purchase  
To get his lege lordes grace.  
Here wittes therupon they caste  
And ben appointed ate laste.  
This lorde a worthy lady had  
Unto his wife, whiche also drad

Her lordes deth, and children five  
Betwene hem two they had alive,  
That weren yonge and tender of age  
And of stature and of visage  
Right faire and lusty on to fe.  
Tho casten they, that he and she  
Forth with their children on the morwe,  
As they that were full of sorwe,  
All naked but of smock and sherte  
To tendre with the kinges herte  
His grace shulden go to seche  
And pardon of the deth besече.  
Thus passen they that wofull night,  
And erly whan they figh it light  
They gone hem forth in suche a wise,  
As thou to-fore hast herd divide,  
All naked but here shertes on  
They wepte and made mochel mone.  
Here hair hangend about here eres.  
With sobbing and with sory teres  
This lord goth than an humble pas,  
That whilom proud and noble was,  
Wherof the cite fore a flight  
Of hem that sawen thilke fight.  
And netheles all openly  
With such weping and with such cry  
Forth with his children and his wife  
He goth to praie for his life.  
Unto the court whan they be come  
And men therin have hede nome,



There was no wight, if he hem figh,  
 From water mighte kepe his eye  
 For sorwe, which they maden tho.  
 The king supposeth of this wo  
 And feigneth, as he nought ne wiste,  
 But netheles at his upriste  
 Men tolden him, howe it ferde.  
 And whan that he this wonder herde,  
 In hast he goth into the halle.  
 And all at ones down they falle,  
 If any pite may be founde.  
 The king, which seeth hem go to grounde,  
 Hath axed hem what is the fere  
 Why they be so dispuiled there.  
 His brother said : ha, lord, mercy !  
 I wote none other cause why,  
 But only that this night full late  
 The trompe of deth was at my gate  
 In token that I shulde deie,  
 Thus we be come for to preie  
 That ye my worldes deth respite.

Ha, fool, how thou art for to wite,  
 The kinge unto his brother saith,  
 That thou art of so litel feith,  
 That only for a trompes foun  
 Hath gone dispuiled through the town  
 Thou and thy wife in such manere  
 Forth with thy children that ben here  
 In sight of alle men aboute.  
 For that thou saist, thou art in doubt

Of deth, which standeth under the lawe  
Of man, and man it may withdrawe,  
So that it may perchaunce faile.  
Now shalt thou nought forthy merveile,  
That I down from my chare alight,  
Whan I beheld to-fore my fight  
In hem that were of so great age  
Min owne deth through here ymage,  
Which god hath set by lawe of kinde,  
Wherof I may no bote finde.  
For well I wot, fuche as they be  
Right fuche am I in my degre  
Of fleshe and blood and so shall deie.  
And thus though I that lawe obeie  
Of which that kinges ben put under,  
It ought ben well the lasse wonder  
Than thou, which art withoute nede  
For lawe of londe in fuche a drede,  
Which for to accompte is but a jape  
As thing, which thou might overscape.  
Forthy, my brother, after this  
I rede, that sithen it so is,  
That thou canst drede a man so fore,  
Drede god with all thin herte more.  
For all shall deie and all shall passe  
As well a leon as an asse,  
As well a begger as a lorde,  
Towardes dethe in one accorde  
They shullen stonde, and in this wise  
The kinge with his wordes wise

118 *CONFESSIO AMANTIS.*

His brother taught and all foryive.

Confessor. Forthy, my sone, if thou wolt live  
In vertue, thou must vice escheue  
And with lowe herte humbleſſe sue,  
So that thou be nought ſurquedous.

Amans. My fader, I am amorous,  
Wherof I wolde you beſeche  
That ye me ſome enſample teche,  
Which might in loves cauſe ſtonde.

Confessor. My ſone, thou ſhalt underſtonde  
In love and other thinges alle,  
If that ſurquedrie falle,  
It may to him nought well betide,  
Which uſeth thilke vice of pride  
Which torneth wiſdom to wening  
And ſothfaſtneſſe into leſing  
Through foll imagination.  
And for thin enformation,  
That thou this vice as I the rede  
Eſcheue ſhalte, a tale I rede,  
Which fell whilom by daies olde,  
So as the clerke Ovide tolde.

Hic in ſpeciali tractat  
confessor cum a-  
mante contra illos,  
qui de propria formo-  
ſitate preſumentes  
amorem mulieris de-  
dignantur. Et narrat  
exemplum, qualiter  
cuiuſdam principis fi-  
lius nomine Narcizus  
eſtivo tempore, cum  
ipſe venacionis cauſa  
quendam cervum ſo-  
lus cum ſuis canibus

There was whilom a lordes ſone,  
Which of his pride a nice wone  
Hath caught, that worthy to his liche  
To ſechen all the worldes riche  
There was no woman for to love.  
So high he ſet him ſelfe above  
Of ſtature and of beaute bothe,  
That him thought alle women lothe.



So was there no comparifon  
 As towarde his condition.  
 This yonge lord Narcizus hight.  
 No ftrengh of love bowe might  
 His herte, whiche is unaffiled.  
 But ate lafte he was beguiled.  
 For of the goddes purveiaunce  
 It felle him on a day perchaunce,  
 That he in all his proude fare  
 Unto the forest gan to fare  
 Amonge other, that there were,  
 To huntē and difporte him there.  
 And whan he cam into the place,  
 Where that he wolde make his chace,  
 The houndes weren in a throwe  
 Uncoupled and the hornes blowe,  
 The great herte anone was founde  
 With fwifte feet fet on the grounde.  
 And he with fpoore in horfe fide  
 Him hafteth fafte for to ride,  
 Till alle men be left behinde.  
 And as he rode under a linde  
 Befide a roche, as I the telle,  
 He figh where fpronge a lufte welle.  
 The day was wonder hote withalle,  
 And fuche a thurft was on him falle,  
 That he muft outhere deie or drinke.  
 And downe he light and by the brinke  
 He tide his hors unto a braunche  
 And laid him lowe for to ftanche

exagitaret, in gravem  
 fitim incurrens neces-  
 sitate compulfus ad bi-  
 bendum de quodam  
 fonte pronus inclina-  
 vit, ubi ipfe faciem  
 fuam pulcherrimam  
 in aqua percipiens  
 putabat fe per hoc il-  
 lam nimpham, quam  
 poete Ekko vocant,  
 in flumine coram fuis  
 oculis potius confpex-  
 iffe, de cuius amore  
 confestim laqueatus,  
 ut ipfam ad fe de  
 fonte extraheret, plu-  
 ribus blanditiis adu-  
 labatur, fed cum illud  
 perficere nullatenus  
 potuit, pre nimio lan-  
 guore deficiens contra  
 lapides ibidem adja-  
 centes caput exverbe-  
 rans cerebrum effudit.  
 Et fic de propria pul-  
 chritudine qui fuerat  
 prefumptuosus de  
 propria pulchritudine  
 fatuatus interit.

His thurst. And as he cast his loke  
Into the welle and hede toke,  
He sigh the like of his visage  
And wende there were an ymage  
Of fuche a nimphe, as tho was say,  
Wherof that love his herte assay  
Began, as it was after sene  
Of his sotie and made him wene  
It were a woman, that he sigh.  
The more he cam the welle nigh,  
The nere cam she to him ayein.  
So wist he never what to fain,  
For whan he wepte he sigh her wepe,  
And whan he cried he toke good kepe,  
The same worde she cried also,  
And thus began the newe wo,  
That whilom was to him so straunge.  
Tho made him love an harde eschaunge  
To set his herte and to beginne  
Thing, whiche he might never winne.  
And ever amonge he gan to loute  
And praith, that she to him come oute.  
And other while he goth a fer  
And other while he draweth ner  
And ever he founde her in one place.  
He wepeth, he crieth, he axeth grace,  
There as he mighte gete none.  
So that ayein a roche of stone,  
As he that knewe none other rede,  
He smote him self til he was dede,

Wherof the nimphes of the welles  
And other that there weren elles  
Unto the wodes belongende  
The body, which was dede ligende,  
For pure pite that they have  
Under grave they begrave.  
And than out of his sepulture  
There spronge anone peraventure  
Of floures fuche a wonder fight,  
That men ensample take might  
Upon the dedes whiche he dede.  
And tho was sene in thilke stede,  
For in the winter fresh and faire  
The floures ben, whiche is contraire  
To kinde, and so was the folie  
Which felle of his furquedrie.

Thus he, which love had in disdeigne, Confessor.  
Worst of all other was beseine,  
And as he set his prise most hie,  
He was left worthy in loves eye  
And most bejaped in his wit,  
Wherof the remembraunce is yit,  
So that thou might ensample take  
And eke all other for his sake.

My fader, as touchend of me Amans.  
This vice I thenke for to fle,  
Whiche of his wening overthroweth  
And namelich of thing, which groweth  
In loves cause or well or wo,  
Yet prided I me never so.



But wolde god that grace sende,  
 That toward me my lady wende  
 As I towardes here wene,  
 My love shulde so be sene,  
 There shulde go no pride a place.  
 But I am fer fro thilke grace  
 And for to speke of time nowe  
 So mote I suffre and praie you,  
 That ye woll axe on other side,  
 If there be any point of pride  
 Wherof it nedeth me to be thrive.

Confessor.    My sone, god it the foryive,  
 If thou have any thing misdo  
 Touchend of this, but evermo  
 Ther is another yet of pride  
 Which couth never his wordes hide,  
 That he ne wold him selfe avaunt.  
 There may nothing his tunge daunt,  
 That he ne clappeth as a belle,  
 Wherof if thou wolt that I telle  
 It is behovely for to here,  
 So that thou might thy tunge stere  
 Toward the worlde and stonde in grace,  
 Which lacketh ofte in many a place  
 To him that can nought fitte stille,  
 Whiche elles shuld have all his wille.

9.    *Magniloque propriam minuit jaētantia lingue  
       Famam, quam stabilem firmat honore silens.  
       Ipse sui laudem meriti non percipit, unde  
       Se sua per verba jaētat in orbe palam.  
       Estque viri culpa jaētantia, que rubifacētas  
       In muliere reas causat habere genas.*

The vice cleped avauntance  
 With pride hath take his acquaintance,  
 So that his owne prise he lasseth  
 Whan he such mesure overpasseth,  
 That he his owne herald is.  
 That first was wel is thanne mis,  
 That was thankworthy is than blame,  
 And thus the worship of his name  
 Through pride of his avauntarie  
 He torneth into vilenie.  
 I rede, how that this proude vice  
 Hath thilke wind in his office,  
 Which through the blastes that he bloweth  
 The mannes fame he overthroweth  
 Of vertue which shulde elles springe  
 Unto the worldes knoueleching.  
 But he fordoth it all to fore,  
 And right of such a maner lore  
 There ben lovers, forthy if thou  
 Art one of hem, tell and say how,  
 Whan thou hast taken any thinge  
 Of loves yeste or ouche or ringe  
 Or toke upon the for the colde  
 Some goodly word that the was tolde  
 Of frendly chere or token or letter,  
 Wherof thin herte was the better,  
 Of that she sende the gretinge.  
 Hast thou for pride of thy likinge  
 Made thin avaunt, where as the liste?  
 I wolde, fader, that ye wiste

Hic loquitur de quarta specie superbie, que iactancia dicitur, ex cuius natura causatur, ut homo de se ipso testimonium perhibens suarum virtutum merita de laude in culpam transferat et, suam famam cum extollere vellet, illam proprio ore subvertat. Sed et Venus in amoris causa de isto vicio maculatos a sua curia super omnes alios abhorrens expellit et eorum multiloquium verecunda detestatur, unde confessor amanti opponens materiam plenius declarat.

Amans.

My conscience lith not here.  
 Yet had I never such matere,  
 Wherof min herte might amende,  
 Nought of so mochel as she sende  
 By mouth and faide : grete him wel.  
 And thus for that there is no dele  
 Wherof to make min avaunt,  
 It is to reson accordaunt,  
 That I may never, but I lie,  
 Of love make avauntarie.  
 I wote nought what I shulde have do,  
 If that I had enchefon so  
 As ye have said here many one.  
 But I found cause never none  
 But daunger, which me welnigh slough.  
 Therof I couthe telle inough  
 And of none other avauntaunce.  
 Thus nedeth me no repentaunce.  
 Now axeth further of my life,  
 For herof am I nought gultife.

Confessor. My sone, I am wel paid with all.  
 For wite it wel in speciall,  
 That love of his verray justice  
 Above all other ayein this vice  
 At alle times most debateth  
 With all his hert and most it hateth.  
 And eke in alle maner wise  
 Avauntarie is to despise,  
 As by ensample thou might wite,  
 Whiche I finde in the bokes write.



Of hem that we Lombardes now calle  
Albinus was the firste of alle,  
 Which bare crowne of Lombardie,  
 And was of great chivalrie  
 In werre ayeinſt divers kinges.  
 So felle amonge other thinges,  
 That he that time a werre had  
 With Gurmund, which the Geptes lad,  
 And was a mightie kinge also.  
 But netheles it fell him ſo  
Albinus ſlough him in the felde,  
Ther halpe him nouthr ſpere ne ſhelde,  
 That he ne ſmote his heved of thanne,  
 Wherof he toke away the panne,  
 Of whiche he ſaide he wolde make  
A cuppe for Gurmundes ſake  
 To kepe and drawe into memoire  
 Of his bataile the victoire.  
 And thus when he the felde had wonne,  
 The londe anon was overronne  
 And ſeſed in his owne honde,  
 Where he Gurmundes doughter fonde,  
 Which maide Rosemunde hight,  
 And was in every mannes ſight  
 A fair, a freſh, a luſty one.  
 His herte fell to her anone,  
 And ſuche a love on her he caſt,  
 That he her wedded ate laſt.  
 And after that long time in reſte  
 With her he dwelleth and to the beſte

Hic ponit  
 exemplum  
 Albinus, qui ve  
 armis prole  
 de ſuo in an  
 deſiderio completo ſe  
 jaſtant. Et narrat,  
 qualiter Albinus pri  
 mus rex Longobardo  
 rum, cum ipſe quen  
 dam alium regem no  
 mine Gurmundum in  
 bello morientem tri  
 umphaſſet, teſtam ca  
 pitis deſuncti auferens  
 ciphum ex ea gemmis  
 et auro circumliga  
 tum in ſue victorie  
 memoriam fabricari  
 conſtituit inſuper et  
 ipſius Gurmundi ſi  
 liam Roſemundam  
 rapiens maritali tho  
 ro in conjugem ſibi  
 copulavit. Unde ipſo  
 Albino poſtea coram  
 regni ſui nobilibus in  
 ſuo regali convivio  
 ſedente diſti Gur  
 mundi ciphum inſuſo  
 vino ad ſe inter epu  
 las afferri juſſit, quem  
 ſumptum uxori ſue  
 regine porrexit di  
 cens: bibe cum pa  
 tre tuo, quod et ipſa  
 huiusmodi operis ig  
 nara fecit. Quo facto  
 rex ſtatim ſuper his,  
 que prius geſta fue  
 rant, cunctis audien  
 tibus per ſingula ſe  
 jaſtavit. Regina vero  
 cum talia audiſſet,  
 celato animo factum  
 abhorrens in mortem  
 domini ſui regis cir  
 cumſpecta induſtria  
 conſpiravit ipſum  
 que auxiliantibus  
 Glodeſida et Hel  
 mege brevi ſubſecuto  
 tempore interfecit,  
 cuius mortem dux

Ravenensis tam in  
corpus dicte regine  
quam suorum fauto-  
rum postea vindicavit.  
Sed et huius tocius  
infortunii sola super-  
bie jactancia fomitem  
ministrabat.

They love eche other wonder wele.  
But she, that kepeth the blinde whele,  
Venus, when they be most above  
In all the hottest of her love,  
Her whele she torneth, and they felle  
In the maner, as I shall telle.  
This king, which stood in all his welth  
Of pees, of worship and of helth,  
And felt him on no side greved  
As he that hath his worlde acheved,  
Tho thought he wolde a feste make  
And that was for his wives sake,  
That she the lordes ate feste,  
That were obeysaunt to his heste,  
May knowe. And so forth there upon  
He lette ordeigne and send anon  
By letters and by messengers  
And warned all his officers,  
That every thing be well arraied,  
The great stedes were assaied  
For justinge and for tornement,  
And many a perled garnement  
Embrouded was ayein the day.  
The lordes in her beste array  
Be comen at the time set,  
One justeth well, an other bet,  
And other while they torney,  
And thus they casten care away  
And token lustes upon honde.  
And after thou shalt understonde



To mete into the kinges halle  
They comen, as they be bidden alle.  
And whan they were fet and served  
Than after, as it was deserved  
To hem, that worthy knightes were  
So as they fetten here and there,  
The prife was yove and spoken out  
Among the heralds all about.  
And thus benethe and eke above  
All was of armes and of love,  
Wherof aboute ate bordes  
Men had many fondry wordes,  
That of the mirthe which they made  
The kinge him self began to glade  
Within his hert and toke a pride  
And figh the cuppe stonde aside,  
Which made was of Gurmundes hed,  
As ye have herd, when he was ded,  
And was with golde and riche stones  
Beset and bounde for the nones,  
And stode upon a fote on highte  
Of burned golde, and with great flighte  
Of werkmenship it was begrave,  
Of such worke as it shulde have  
And was policed eke so clene,  
That no signe of the scull was sene  
But as it were a gripes eye.  
The king bad bere his cuppe away  
Which stood before him on the borde  
And fette thilke upon his worde.



This sculle is fette and wine therinne,  
 Wherof he bad his wife beginne :  
 Drink with thy fader, dame, he said.  
 And she to his bidding obeid  
 And toke the sculle, and what her list  
 She drank as she, which nothing wist  
 What cup it was. And than all out  
 The kinge in audience about  
 Hath tolde, it was her faders sculle,  
 So that the lordes knowe shulle  
 Of his bataile a soth witnesse,  
 And made avaunt through what prowesse  
 He hath his wives love wonne,  
 Whiche of the sculle hath so begonne.  
 Tho was there mochel pride alofte,  
 They spoken all, and she was softe,  
 Thenkend on thilke unkind pride  
 Of that her lord so nigh her side  
 Avaunteth him, that he hath slaine  
 And piked out her faders braine  
 And of the sculle had made a cuppe.  
 She suffreth all till they were uppe,  
 And tho she hath sekenesse feigned  
 And goth to chambre and hath compleigned  
 Unto a maide which she triste,  
 So that none other wight it wiste.  
 This maide Glodeside is hote,  
 To whom this lady hath behote  
 Of ladiship all that she can  
 To vengen her upon this man,

Which did her drink in fuche a plite  
 Among hem alle for despite  
 Of her and of her fader bothe,  
 Wherof her thoughtes ben so wrothe,  
 She saith, that she shall nought be glad,  
 Till that she se him so bestad,  
 That he no more make avaunt.  
 And thus they felle in covenaut,  
 That they accorden ate laste  
 With fuche wiles as they caste,  
 That they wol get of here accorde  
 Some orped knight to sle this lorde.  
 And with this sleighte they beginne,  
 How they Helmege mighten winne,  
 Which was the kinges boteler,  
 A proude and lusty bachiler,  
 And Glodeside he loveth hote.  
 And she to make him more affote  
 Her love graunteth, and by nighte  
 They shapen how they to-gider mighte  
 A bedde mete. And done it was  
 This same night. And in this cas  
 The quene her self the night seconde  
 Went in her stede and there she fonde  
 A chambre derke without light  
 And goth to bedde to this knight.  
 And he to kepe his observaunce  
 To love doth his obeisaunce  
 And weneth it be Glodeside.  
 And she than after lay a side

And axeth him what he hath do,  
 And who she was she tolde him tho  
 And said: Helmege, I am thy quene,  
 Now shall thy love well be sene  
 Of that thou hast thy wille wrought,  
 Or it shall fore ben about,  
 Or thou shalt worche, as I the saie.  
 And if thou wolt by suche a waie  
 Do my plesauce and holde it stille,  
 For ever I shall ben at thy wille  
 Bothe I and all min heritage.

Anone the wilde loves rage,  
 In which no man him can governe,  
 Hath made him, that he can nought werne,  
 But felle all hole to her assent,  
 And thus the whele is all miswent,  
 The which fortune hath upon honde.  
 For how that ever it after stonde,  
 They shope among hem such a wile  
 The king was ded within a while.  
 So silyly came it nought aboute,  
 That they ne ben discovered out,  
 So that it thought hem for the beste  
 To fle, for there was no reste.  
 And thus the tresor of the kinge  
 They trusse and mochel other thinge  
 And with a certaine felaship  
 They fled and went away by ship  
 And helde her right cours from thenne,  
 Till that they comen to Rавenne,



Where they the dukes helpe fought.  
And he, so as they him befought,  
A place graunteth for to dwelle.  
But after, whan he herde telle  
Of the maner how they have do,  
The duke let shape for hem so,  
That of a poison which they drunke  
They hadden that they have beswunke.  
And all this made avaunt of pride.  
Good is therfore a man to hide  
His owne prife, for if he speke,  
He may lightly his thanke breke.  
In armes lith none avauntance  
To him, which thenketh his name avaunce  
And be renommed of his dede.  
And also who that thenketh to spede  
Of love he may nought him avaunte.  
For what man thilke vice haunte,  
His purpose shall full ofte faile.  
In armes he that woll travaile  
Or elles loves grace atteigne,  
His lose tunge he mot restreigne,  
Whiche bereth of his honour the keie.

Forthy my sone, in alle waie  
Take right good hede of this matere.

Confessor.

I thonke you, my fader dere,  
This scole is of a gentil lore.  
And if there be ought elles more  
Of pride whiche I shall escheue,  
Nowe axeth forth, and I woll sue

Amans.

What thing, that ye me woll enforme.

Confessor.

My sone, yet in other forme  
There is a vice of prides lore,  
Which like an hawk, whan he will fore,  
Fleeth up on high in his delices  
After the likinge of his vices  
And woll no mannes reson knowe,  
Till he down falle and overthrowe.  
This vice veingloire is hote,  
Wherof, my sone, I the behote  
To trete and speke in suche a wise,  
That thou the might better avise.

10. *Gloria perpetuos pregnat mundana dolores,  
Qui tamen est vanus gaudia vana cupit.  
Eius amiciciam, quem gloria tollit inanis,  
Non sine blanditiis planus habebit homo.  
Verbis compositis qui scit strigilare favellum,  
Scandere sellata jura valebit eques.  
Sic in amore magis qui blanda subornat in ore  
Verba per hoc bravium que nequit alter habet.  
Et tamen ornatos cantus variosque paratus  
Letaque corda suis legibus optat amor.*

Hic loquitur de  
quinta specie su-  
perbie, que inanis  
gloria vocatur, et  
eiusdem vicii natu-  
ram primo descri-  
bens super eodem  
in amoris causa  
confessor amanti  
consequenter op-  
ponit.

The proude vice of veingloire  
Remembreth nought of purgatoire,  
His worldes joies ben so grete,  
Him thenketh of heven no beyete.  
This lives pompe is all his pees,  
Yet shall he deie netheles,  
And therof thenketh he but a lite,  
For all his lust is to delite  
In newe thinges, proude and veine,  
Als ferforth as he may atteine.

I trowe, if that he mighte make  
His body newe, he wolde take  
A newe forme and leve his olde.  
For what thing, that he may beholde,  
The which to comun use is straunge,  
Anone his olde guise chaunge  
He woll and falle therupon  
Lich unto the camelion,  
Whiche upon every sondry hewe  
That he beholt he mote newe  
His colour, and thus unavised  
Ful ofte time he stant desguised  
More jolif than the brid in maie.  
He maketh him ever fresfh and gaie  
And doth all his array desguise,  
So that of him the newe guise  
Of lusty folke all other take.  
And eke he can carolles make,  
Roundel, balade and virelay.  
And with all this, if that he may  
Of love gete him avauntage,  
Anone he wext of his corage  
So over glad, that of his ende  
He thinketh there is no deth comende.  
For he hath than at alle tide  
Of love such a maner pride,  
Him thinketh his joy is endeles.

Now thrive the, sone, in goddes pees  
And of thy love tell me plein,  
If that thy gloire hath be so vein.

Salomon. Amic-  
tus eius annunciat  
de eo.

Confessor.



Amans. My fader, as touchend of all  
 I may nought well ne nought ne shall  
 Of vein gloire excuse me,  
 That I ne have for love be  
 The better address'd and arraied.  
 And also I have ofte assaied  
 Roundel, balade and virelay  
 For her, on whom min herte lay,  
 To make and also for to peinte  
 Carolles with my wordes queinte  
 To sette my purpos alofte.  
 And thus I sang hem forth full ofte  
 In halle and eke in chambre aboute  
 And made merie among the route.  
 But yet ne ferde I nought the bet.  
 Thus was my gloire in vein beset  
 Of all the joie that I made.  
 For when I wolde with her glade  
 And of her love songes make,  
 She saide, it was nought for her sake,  
 And liste nought my songes here  
 Ne witen, what the wordes were.  
 So for to speke of min array  
 Yet couth I never be so gay  
 Ne so well make a songe of love,  
 Wherof I mighte ben above  
 And have encheson to be glad.  
 But rather I am ofte adrad  
 For forwe, that she saith me nay.  
 And netheles I woll nought say,

That I nam glad on other fide  
For fame, that can nothing hide.  
All day woll bringe unto min ere  
Of that men speken here and there,  
How that my lady berth the prife,  
How she is faire, how she is wise,  
How she is womanlich of chere.  
Of all this thing whan I may here,  
What wonder is though I be fain.  
And eke whan I may here fain  
Tidinges of my ladis hele,  
All though I may nought with her dele,  
Yet am I wonder glad of that.  
For whan I wote her good estate,  
As for that time I dare well fwere,  
None other forwe may me dere.  
Thus am I gladed in this wise.  
But, fader, of your lores wise,  
Of whiche ye be fully taught,  
Now tell me if ye thenketh ought,  
That I therof am for to wite.  
Of that there is, I the acquite,  
My sone, he saide, and for thy good  
I woll that thou understood,  
For I thenke upon this matere  
To tell a tale, as thou shalt here,  
How that ayein this proude vice  
The highe god of his justice  
Is wrothe and great vengeaunce doth.  
Nowe herken a tale, that is soth,

Confessor.

136 CONFESSIO AMANTIS.

Though it be nought of loves kinde.  
A great ensample thou shalt finde  
This veingloire for to fle,  
Whiche is so full of vanite.

11. *Humani generis cum sit tibi gloria major,  
Sepe subesse solet proximis ille dolor.  
Mens elata graves descensus sepe subibit,  
Mens humilis stabile molleque firmat iter.  
Motibus innumeris volutat fortuna per orbem,  
Cum magis alta petis, inferiora time.*

Hic ponit confessor exemplum contra vicium inanis glorie narrans, qualiter Nabugodonosor rex Caldeorum cum ipse in omni sue magestatis gloria celsior extitisset, deus eius superbiam castigare volens ipsum extra formam hominis in bestiam fenum comedentem tranſmutavit. Et sic per septennium penitens cum ipse potentioſiorem ſe agnovit, miſertus deus ipſum in regni ſui ſolium reſtituta ſanitate emendatum gracioſius collocavit.

There was a king, that mochel might,  
Which Nabugodonosor hight,  
Of whom that I ſpake here to-fore.  
Yet in the bible this name is bore,  
For all the worlde in thorient  
Was hole at his commaundement,  
As than of kinges to his liche  
Was none ſo mighty ne ſo riche,  
To his empire and to his lawes  
As who faith all in thilke dawes  
Were obeifaunt and tribute bere,  
As though he god of erthe were.  
With ſtrengthe he put kinges under  
And wrought of pride many a wonder,  
He was ſo full of veingloire,  
That he ne hadde no memoire,  
That there was any god but he  
For pride of his proſperite.  
Till that the highe king of kinges,  
Which ſeeth and knoweth alle thinges,  
Whoe eye may nothinge aſterte  
The privetes of mannes herte,



They speke and sounen in his ere  
As though they loude windes were,  
He toke vengeaunce of his pride.  
But for he wolde a while abide  
To loke, if he wolde him amende,  
To him afore token he sende.  
And that was in his slepe by night  
This proude kinge a wonder fight  
Had in his sweven, there he lay.  
Him thought upon a mery day,  
As he beheld the world aboute,  
A tre full growe he figh there oute  
Which stood the world amiddes even,  
Whos heighte straught up to the heven.  
The leues weren faire and large,  
Of fruit it bore so ripe a charge,  
That alle men it mighte fede.  
He figh also the bowes sprede  
Above all erth, in whiche were  
The kinde of alle briddes there.  
And eke him thought he figh also  
The kinde of alle bestes go  
Under the tre about round  
And fedden hem upon the ground.  
As he this wonder stood and figh,  
Him thought he herde a vois on high  
Criende, and saide aboven alle :  
Hewe down this tree and let it falle,  
The leues let defoule in haste  
And do the fruit destruie and waste.

And let offshreden every braunche,  
But ate roote he let it staunche.  
Whan all his pride is cast to grounde,  
The roote shall be faste bounde  
And shall no mannes herte bere,  
But every lust he shall forbere  
Of man and lich an oxe his mete  
Of gras he shall purchase and ete,  
Till al the waters of the heven  
Have washen him by times seven,  
So that he be through-knowe aright,  
What is the hevenliche might,  
And be made humble to the wille  
Of him, which may all save and spille.  
This king out of his sweven abraide  
And he upon the morwe it saide  
Unto the clerkes, which he hadde.  
But none of hem the soth aradde,  
Was none his sweven couth undo.  
And it stood thilke time so,  
This kinge had in subjection  
Judee and of affection  
Above al other one Daniel  
He loveth, for he couthe well  
Divine, that none other couthe.  
To him were alle thinges couthe,  
As he it hadde of goddes grace.  
He was before the kinges face  
Assent and bode, that he shulde  
Upon the point the kinge of tolde

The fortune of his sweven expounde,  
As it shulde afterward be founde.  
Whan Daniel this sweven herde,  
He stood long time, er he answerde,  
And made a wonder hevy chere.  
The king toke hede of his manere  
And bad him telle that he wiste  
As he, to whome he mochel triste,  
And said, he wolde nought be wroth.  
But Daniel was wonder loth  
And said: upon thy fomen alle,  
Sir king, thy sweven mote falle.  
And netheles touchend of this  
I woll the tellen, howe it is  
And what disese is to the shape,  
God wote if thou it shall escape.  
The highe tre, which thou hast sein,  
With lef and fruit so wel besein,  
The which stood in the world amiddes,  
So that the bestes and the briddes  
Governed were of him alone,  
Sir king, betokeneth thy persone,  
Which stonde above all erthely thinges.  
Thus regnen under the the kinges  
And all the people unto the louteth  
And all the worlde thy person doubteth,  
So that with vein honour deceived  
Thou hast the reverence weived  
Fro him, whiche is thy kinge above,  
That thou for drede ne for love



Wolt nothing knowen of this god,  
Which now for the hath made a rod,  
Thy veingloire and thy folie  
With grete peines to chastie.  
And of the vois thou herdest speke,  
Which bad the bowes for to breke  
And hewe and felle down the tre,  
That word belongeth unto the.  
Thy regne shall be overthrowe,  
And thou despuiled for a throwe.  
But that the roote shulde stonde,  
By that thou shalt wel understonde,  
There shall abide of thy regne  
A time ayein whan thou shall regne.  
And eke of that thou herdest saie  
To take a mannes hert aweie  
And sette there a bestiall,  
So that he lich an oxe shall  
Pasture, and that he be bereined  
By times seven and fore peined,  
Till that he knowe his goddes mightes,  
Than shall he stond ayein uprightes.  
All this betokeneth thine estate,  
Which now with god is in debate,  
Thy mannes forme shall be lassed,  
Till seven yere ben overpassed,  
And in the likenesse of a beste  
Of gras shall be thy roiall feste,  
The weder shall upon the reine.  
And understonde, that all this peine,

Which thou shalt suffre thilke tide,  
Is shape all only for thy pride  
Of veingloire and of the finne,  
Which thou hast longe stonden inne.  
So upon this condicion  
Thy sweven hath expoficion.  
But er this thing befalle in dede,  
Amende the, this wold I rede,  
Yif and departe thin almesse,  
Do mercy forth with rightwifnesse,  
Beseeche and praie the highe grace,  
For so thou might thy pees purchase  
With god and stonde in good accorde.  
But pride is loth to leve his lorde  
And wol nought suffre humilite  
With him to stonde in no degre.  
And whan a ship hath lost his stere,  
Is none so wise, that may him stere  
Ayein the wawes in a rage.  
This proude king in his corage  
Humilite hath so forlore,  
That for no sweven he figh to-fore  
Ne yet for all that Daniel  
Him hath counseiled every dele,  
He let it passe out of his minde  
Through veingloire, and as the blinde  
He seth no weie, er him be wo.  
And fel withinne a time so,  
As he in Babiloine wente,  
The vanite of pride him hente.

His hert aros of vein gloire,  
So that he drough into memoire  
His lordship and his regalie  
With wordes of furquedrie.  
And whan that he him most avaunteth,  
That lord, which veingloire daunteth,  
All fodeinlich as who saith treis  
Where that he stood in his paleis  
He toke him fro the mennes fight.  
Was none of hem so ware, that might  
Set eye, where that he becom.  
And thus was he from his kingdom  
Into the wilde forest drawe,  
Where that the mighty goddes lawe  
Through his power did him transforme  
Fro man into a bestes forme.  
And lich an oxe under the fote  
He grafeth as he nedes mote  
To geten him his lives fode.  
Tho thought him colde graffes goode,  
That whilome ete the hote spices,  
Thus was he torned fro delices.  
The wine, which he was wont to drinke,  
He toke than of the welles brinke  
Or of the pit or of the slough,  
It thought him thanne good inough.  
In stede of chambres well arraied  
He was than of a bussh well paied,  
The harde ground he lay upon  
For other pilwes had he non,



The stormes and the reines fall,  
The windes blowe upon him all,  
He was tormented day and night.  
Such was the highe goddes might,  
Till seven yere an ende toke.  
Upon him self tho gan he loke,  
In stede of mete gras and streis,  
In stede of handes longe cleis,  
In stede of man a bestes like  
He sigh, and than he gan to fike  
For cloth of golde and of perrie,  
Which him was wont to magnifie.  
When he beheld his cote of heres  
He wepte and with wofull teres  
Up to the heven he caste his chere  
Wepend and thought in this manere,  
Though he no wordes mighte winne,  
Thus said his hert and spake withinne :  
O mighty god, that all hast wrought  
And all might bring ayein to nought  
Now knowe I wel but all of the  
This world hath no prosperite,  
In thin aspect ben alle aliche  
The pouer man and eke the riche,  
Withoute the there may no wight,  
And thou above all other might.  
O mighty lord, toward my vice  
Thy mercy medle with iustice  
And I woll make a covenaut,  
That of my life the remenaunt

I shall it by thy grace amende  
 And in thy lawe so dispende,  
 That veingloire I shall escheue  
 And bowe unto thin heste and sue  
 Humilite, and that I vowe.  
 And so thenkend he gan down bowe,  
 And though him lacke vois of speche,  
 He gan up with his fete areche  
 And wailend in his bestly steven  
 He made his plaint unto the heven.  
 He kneleth in his wise and braieth  
 To seche mercy and assaieth  
 His god, which made him nothing straunge.  
 Whan that he sigh his pride chaunge  
 Anone as he was humble and tame  
 He found toward his god the same,  
 And in a twinkeling of a loke  
 His mannes forme ayein he toke  
 And was reformed to the regne,  
 In whiche that he was wont to regne,  
 So that the pride of veingloire  
 Ever afterward out of memoire  
 He lett it passe. And thus is shewed  
 What is to ben of pride unthewed  
 Ayein the highe goddes lawe.  
 To whom no man may be felawe.

Confessor. Forthy my sone, take good hede  
 So for to lede thy manhede,  
 That thou ne be nought lich a beste.  
 But if thy life shall ben honeste

Thou must humbleſſe take on honde,  
 For thanne might thou fiker ſtonde,  
 And for to ſpeke it other wiſe  
 A proud man can no love aſſiſe.  
 For though a woman wolde him pleaſe,  
 His pride can nought ben at eſe.  
 There may no man to mochel blame  
 A vice, which is for to blame.  
 Forthy men ſhulden nothing hide,  
 That mighte fall in blame of pride,  
 Whiche is the worſt vice of alle,  
 Wherof ſo as it was befallē  
 The tale I thenke of a cronique  
 To telle, if that it may the like,  
 So that thou might humbleſſe ſue  
 And eke the vice of pride eſcheue,  
 Wherof the gloire is falſe and veine,  
 Which god him ſelf hath in diſdeine,  
 That though it mounte for a throwe,  
 It ſhall down falle and overthrowe.

*Eſt virtus humilis, per quam deus altus ad ima  
 Se tulit et noſtre viſcera carnis habet.  
 Sic humilis ſupereſt, et amor ſibi ſubditur omnis,  
 Cuius habet nulla ſorte ſuperbus opem.  
 Odit eum terra, celum deiecit et ipſum,  
 Sedibus inferni ſtatque receptus ibi.*

12.

A king whilom was yonge and wiſe,  
 The which ſet of his wit great priſe.  
 Of depe ymaginations  
 And ſtraunge interpretations,

Hic narrat confessor  
 exemplum ſimpliciter  
 contra ſuperbiam et  
 dicit, quod nuper qui-  
 dam rex famoſe pru-  
 dencie cuidam militi  
 ſuo ſuper tribus queſ-



tionibus, ut inde certitudinis respon-  
sionem daret, sub pena  
capitalis sentencie  
terminum prefixit.

Primo quid minoris  
indigencie ab inhabi-  
tantibus orbem auxi-  
lium majus obtinuit.  
Secundo quid majoris  
valencie meritum

continens minoris ex-  
pense reprisas exiguit.

Tercio quid omnia  
bona diminuens ex sui  
proprietate nichil pe-  
nitius valuit. Quarum  
vero questionum que-  
dam virgo dicti mili-  
tis filia nomine patris  
sapientissima solucio-  
nem aggrediens tali-  
ter regi respondit. Ad  
primam dixit, quod  
terra nullius indiget,  
quam tantum adju-  
vare cotidianis labo-  
ribus omnes inten-  
dunt. Ad secundam  
dixit, quod humilitas  
omnibus virtutibus  
prevalet, que tamen  
nullius prodigalitat-  
is expensis mensuram  
excedit. Ad terciam  
dixit, quod superbia  
omnia tam corporis  
quam anime bona  
devastans majores ex-  
pensarum excessus in-  
ducit. Et tamen nul-  
lius valoris immo to-  
cius perditionis cau-  
sam sua culpa minis-  
trat.

Prima questio.

Problemes and demaundes eke  
His wisdom was to finde and seke,  
Wherof he wolde in sondry wise  
Opposen hem, that weren wise.  
But none of hem it mighte bere  
Upon his word to yive answere  
Out taken one, which was a knight,  
To him was every thing so light,  
That also sone as he hem herde  
The kinges wordes he answerde,  
What thing the king him axe wolde,  
Whereof anone the trouth he tolde.  
The king somdele had an envie  
And thought he wolde his wittes plie  
To sete some conclusion,  
Which shulde be confusion  
Unto this knight, so that the name  
And of wisdom the highe fame  
Toward him selfe he wolde winne.  
And thus of all his wit withinne  
This king began to studie and muse  
What straunge mater he might use  
The knightes wittes to confounde,  
And ate last he hath it founde  
And for the knight anon he sente,  
That he shall telle what he mente.  
Upon thre points stood the matere  
Of questions as thou shalte here.

The firste point of alle thre  
Was this: what thing in his degre

Of all this world hath nede left  
And yet men helpe it allthermest.

The seconde is : what moste is worth      *Secunda questio.*  
And of costage is lest put forth.

The thrid is : which is of most cost      *Tercia questio.*  
And lest is worth and goth to lost.

The king these thre demaundes axeth,  
To the knight this law he taxeth,  
That he shall gone and comen ayein  
The thridde weke and tell him pleine  
To every point, what it amounteth.  
And if so be, that he miscounteth

To make in his answere a faile,  
There shall none other thinge availe,  
The king saith, but he shall be dede  
And lese his goodes and his hede.

This knight was sory of this thinge  
And wolde excuse him to the kinge,  
But he ne wolde him nought forbere,  
And thus the knight of his answere  
Goth home to take avisement.

But after his entendement  
The more he cast his wit aboute,  
The more he stant therof in doubte.  
Tho wist he well the kinges herte,  
That he the deth ne shulde asterte  
And suche a forwe to him hath take,  
That gladship he hath all forsake.  
He thought first upon his life  
And after that upon his wife,



Upon his children eke also,  
 Of whiche he had doughteres two.  
 The yongest of hem had of age  
 Fourtene yere, and of visage  
 She was right faire and of stature  
 Lich to an hevenlich figure,  
 And of maner and goodly speche,  
 Though men wolde alle londes seche,  
 They shulden nought have founde her like.  
 She sigh her fader forwe and sike  
 And wist nought the cause why.  
 So cam she to him prively  
 And that was, wher he made his mone  
 Within a gardin all him one.  
 Upon her knees she gan down falle  
 With humble herte and to him calle  
 And saide: O good fader dere,  
 Why make ye thus hevy chere  
 And I wot nothinge how it is?  
 And well ye knowe, fader, this,  
 What aventure that you felle  
 Ye might it fauflly to me telle,  
 For I have ofte herd you saide,  
 That ye such truste have on me laide,  
 That to my suster ne to my brother  
 In all this worlde ne to none other  
 Ye durste telle a privete  
 So well, my fader, as to me.  
 Forthy, my fader, I you praie  
 Ne casteth nought that hert awaie,



For I am she, that wolde kepe  
Your honour. And with that to wepe  
Her eye may nought be forbore,  
She wissheth for to ben unbore,  
Er that her fader so mistrifte  
To tellen her of that he wiste.  
And ever among mercy she cride,  
That he ne shulde his counseil hide  
From her, that so wolde him good  
And was so nigh fleshe and blood.  
So that with weping ate laste  
His chere upon his childe he caste  
And forwefully to that she praide  
He tolde his tale and thus he saide :  
The sorwe, doughter, which I make  
Is nought all only for my sake,  
But for the bothe and for you alle.  
For suche a chaunce is me befallle,  
That I shall er this thridde day  
Lese all that ever I lese may,  
My life and all my good therto.  
Therefore it is I sorwe so.

What is the cause, alas, quod she,  
My fader, that ye shulden be  
Dede and destrued in suche a wise ?  
And he began the points devise,  
Which as the king tolde him by mouthe  
And said her plainly, that he couthe  
Answeren to no point of this.  
And she, that hereth howe it is,

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Her counseil yaf and saide tho :  
My fader, sithen it is so,  
That ye can se none other weie,  
But that ye must nedes deie,  
I wolde pray you of o thinge,  
Let me go with you to the kinge,  
And ye shall make him understonde,  
How ye my wittes for to fonde  
Have laid your answere upon me,  
And telleth him in such degre  
Upon my worde ye wol abide  
To life or deth what so betide.  
For yet perchaunce I may purchase  
With some good word the kinges grace,  
Your life and eke your good to save.  
For ofte shall a woman have  
Thing, whiche a man may nought areche.  
The fader herd his daughters speche  
And thought there was no reson in  
And sigh his owne life to winne  
He couthe done him self no cure.  
So better him thought in aventure  
To put his life and all his good,  
Than in the maner as it stood  
His life incertein for to lese.  
And thus thenkend he gan to chese  
To do the counseil of this maid  
And toke the purpose, which she said.  
The day was comen and forth they gone,  
Unto the court they come anone,

Where as the kinge in his jugement  
Was fet and hath this knight assent.  
Arraied in her beste wife  
This maiden with her wordes wife  
Her fader ledde by the honde  
Into the place, where he fonde  
The king with other which he wolde,  
And to the king knelend he tolde,  
As he enformed was to-fore  
And praith the king, that he therfore  
His doughters wordes wolde take  
And saith, that he woll undertake  
Upon her wordes for to stonde.  
Tho was ther great merveile on honde,  
That he, which was so wise a knight,  
His life upon so yonge a wight  
Besette wolde in jeopartie,  
And many it helden for folie.  
But at the laste netheles  
The king commaundeth ben in pees  
And to this maide he cast his chere  
And saide, he wolde her tale here  
And bad her speke, and she began :  
My lege lord, so as I can,  
Quod she, the pointes which I herde,  
They shull of reson ben answerde.  
The first I understonde is this,  
What thinge of all the worlde it is,  
Which men most helpe and hath left nede.  
My lege lord, this wolde I rede



The erthe it is, whiche evermo  
 With mannes labour is bego  
 As well in winter as in maie.  
 The mannes honde doth what he may  
 To helpe it forth and make it riche,  
 And forthy men it delve and dicke  
 And eren it with strength of plough,  
 Wher it hath of him self inough  
 So that his nede is ate leste.  
 For every man, birde and beste  
 Of flour and gras and roote and rinde  
 And every thing by way of kinde  
 Shall sterue, and erthe it shall become,  
 As it was out of erthe nome  
 It shall to therthe torne ayein.  
 And thus I may by reson sein  
 That erthe is most nedeles  
 And most men helpe it netheles,  
 So that, my lord, touchend of this  
 I have answerde how that it is.

That other point I understood,  
 Which most is worth and most is good  
 And costeth lest a man to kepe,  
 My lorde, if ye woll take kepe,  
 I say it is humilite,  
 Through whiche the high Trinite  
 As for deserte of pure love  
 Unto Marie from above  
 Of that he knewe her humble entente  
 His owne sone adown he sente

Above all other, and her he chese  
For that vertu, which bodeth pees.  
So that I may by reson calle  
Humilite most worthe of alle,  
And lest it costeth to mainteine  
In all the worlde, as it is feine.  
For who that hath humbleſſe on honde  
He bringeth no werres into londe,  
For he defireth for the best  
To setten every man in reſte.  
Thus with your highe reverence  
Me thenketh that this evidence  
As to this point is ſuffiſaunt.

And touchend of the remenaunt,  
Whiche is the thridde of your axinges,  
What leſt is worth of alle thinges  
And costeth moſt, I telle it pride,  
Which may nought in the heven abide.  
For Lucifer with hem that felle  
Bar pride with him into helle.  
There was pride of to grete coſt,  
Whan he for pride hath heven loſt,  
And after that in paradise  
Adam for pride loſt his priſe  
In middel-erth. And eke alſo  
Pride is the cauſe of alle wo,  
That all the world ne may ſuffiſe  
To ſtaunche of pride the reſpriſe.  
Pride is the heved of all finne,  
Which waſteth all and may nought winne.

Pride is of every mis the pricke,  
 Pride is the worste of all wicke  
 And costeth most and lest is worth  
 In place where he hath his forth.

Thus have I said that I woll say  
 Of min answere and to you pray,  
 My lege lorde, of your office,  
 That ye such grace and suche justice  
 Ordeigne for my fader here,  
 That after this, whan men it here,  
 The world therof may speke good.

The king, which reson understood  
 And hath all herde how she hath said,  
 Was inly glad and so well paid,  
 That all his wrath is over go.  
 And he began to loke tho  
 Upon this maiden in the face,  
 In which he found so mochel grace,  
 That all his prife on her he laide  
 In audience and thus he saide :  
 My faire maide, well the be  
 Of thin answere, and eke of the  
 Me liketh well, and as thou wilst  
 Forgive be thy faders gilte.  
 And if thou were of such lignage,  
 That thou to me were of parage  
 And that thy fader were a pere,  
 As he is now a bachelere,  
 So fiker as I have a life,  
 Thou sholdest thanne be my wife.



But this I faie netheles,  
That I woll shape thin encrese,  
What worldes good that thou wolt crave  
Are of my yift, and thou shalt have.

And she the king with wordes wise  
Knelende thonketh in this wise :  
My lege lord, god mot you quite.  
My fader here hath but a lite  
Of warifon, and that he wende  
Had all be lost, but now amende  
He may well through your noble grace.

With that the king right in his place  
Anon forth in that freshe hete  
An erldome, which than of eschete  
Was late falle into his honde,  
Unto this knight with rent and londe  
Hath yove and with his chartre sedef.  
And thus was all the noife appesed.  
This maiden, which sate on her knees  
To-fore the kinges charitees,  
Commendeth and saith evermore :  
My lege lord, right now to-fore  
Ye faide, and it is of recorde,  
That if my fader were a lorde  
And pere unto these other grete,  
Ye wolden for nought elles lette,  
That I ne sholde be your wife.  
And thus wote every worthy life  
A kinges worde mot nede be holde.  
Forthy my lord, if that ye wolde

So great a charite fulfille,  
 God wote it were well my wille.  
 For he, which was a bachelere,  
 My fader is now made a pere,  
 So whan as ever that I cam  
 An erles doughter nowe I am.

This yonge king, which peised all  
 Her beaute and her wit withall,  
 As he, which was with love hente,  
 Anone therto yaf his assente.  
 He might nought the place asterte,  
 That she nis lady of his herte.  
 So that he toke her to his wife  
 To holde, while that he hath life.  
 And thus the king toward his knight  
 Accordeth him, as it is right.  
 And over this good is to wite  
 In the cronique as it is write  
 This noble kinge, of whom I tolde,  
 Of Spaine by tho daies olde  
 The kingdom had in governaunce,  
 And as the boke maketh remembraunce  
 Alphonse was his propre name.  
 The knight also, if I shall name,  
 Danz Petro hight, and as men telle  
 His doughter wife Petronelle  
 Was cleped, which was full of grace.  
 And that was sene in thilke place,  
 Where she her fader out of tene  
 Hath brought and made her selfe a quene,

Of that she hath so well desclofed  
The points, wherof she was opposed.

Lo now, my sone, as thou might here, *Confessor.*  
Of all this thing to my matere  
But one I take, and that is pride,  
To whom no grace may betide.  
In heven he fell out of his stede  
And paradise him was forbede,  
The good men in erthe him hate,  
So that to helle he mote algate,  
Where every vertue shall be weived  
And every vice be rescived.  
But humbleſſe is all other wise,  
Which most is worth and no reprice  
It taketh ayein, but softe and faire  
If any thing ſtant in contraire  
With humble ſpeche it is redressed.  
Thus was this yonge maiden blessed,  
The whiche I spake of now to-fore,  
Her faders life she gat therfore  
And wan with all the kinges love.  
Forthy my sone, if thou wolt love,  
It fit the well to leve pride  
And take humbleſſe on thy side,  
The more of grace thou shalt gete.

My fader, I woll nought foryete  
Of this that ye have told me here,  
And if that any such manere  
Of humble port may love appaie,  
Here afterwarde I thonke assaie.

*Amans.*



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But now forth over I beseeche,  
That ye more of my shrifte seeke.

Confessor. My gode sone, it shall be do.  
Now herken and lay an ere to,  
For as touchend of prides fare  
Als ferforth as I can declare  
In cause of vice, in cause of love  
That hast thou plainly herde above,  
So that there is no more to saie  
Touchend of that, but other waie  
Touchend envie I thenke telle,  
Whiche hath the propre kinde of helle,  
Withoute cause to misdo  
Toward him self and other also  
Here afterward as understonde  
Thou shalt the spieces, as they stonde.

*Explicit liber primus.*



## Incipit Liber Secundus.

*Invidie culpa magis est attrita dolore,  
 Nam sua mens nullo tempore leta manet.  
 Quo gaudent alii, dolet ille, nec unus amicus  
 Est, cui de puro commoda velle facit.  
 Proximitatis honor sua corda veretur, et omnis  
 Est sibi leticia sic aliena dolor.  
 Hoc etenim vicium quam sepe repugnat amanti,  
 Non sibi, sed reliquis, dum favet ipsa Venus.  
 Est amor ex proprio motu fantasticus, et que  
 Gaudia fert aliis credit obesse sibi.*

1.

**N**OW after the secounde  
 There is, which many a wo-  
 full stounde,  
 Towardes other berth aboute  
 Within him self and nought withoute.  
 For in his thought he brenneth ever,  
 Whan that he wote an other lever  
 Or more vertuos than he,  
 Which passeth him in his degre.  
 Therof he taketh his maladie.  
 That vice is cleped hot envie.  
 Forthy my sone, if it be so,  
 Thou art or hast ben one of tho,  
 As for to speke in loves cas  
 If ever yet thin herte was

Hic in secundo li-  
 bro tractat de invi-  
 dia et eius specie-  
 bus, quarum dolor  
 alterius gaudii pri-  
 ma nuncupatur,  
 cuius condicionem  
 secundum vicium  
 confessor primitus  
 describens amanti,  
 quatenus amorem  
 concernit, super  
 eodem consequen-  
 ter opponit.

Confessor.

Seke of an other mannes hele ?

Amans. So god avaunce my quarele,  
My fader, ye a thousand sithe,  
Whan I have sene another blithe  
Of love and hadde a goodly chere,  
Ethna, which brenneth yere by yere,  
Was thanne nought so hote as I  
Of thilke fore which prively  
Mine hertes thought withinne brenneth.  
The ship, which on the wawes renneth  
And is forstorned and forblowe,  
Is nought more peined for a throwe  
Than I am thanne whan I se  
Another, which that passeth me  
In that fortune of loves yifte.  
But fader, this I telle in shrifte,  
That is no where but in o place.  
For who that lese or finde grace  
In other stede, it may nought greve.  
But this ye may right well beleve,  
Toward my lady, that I serve,  
Though that I wiste for to sterve,  
Min hert is full of such foly,  
That I my selfe may nought chasty,  
Whan I the court se of Cupide  
Approche unto my lady side  
Of hem that lusty ben and freshe,  
Though it availe hem nought a resshe.  
But only that they ben of speche,  
My sorwe is than nought to seche.



But whan they rounen in her ere,  
Than groweth all my moſte fere.  
And namely whan they talen longe,  
My ſorwes thanne be ſo ſtronge,  
Of that I ſee hem well at eſe  
I can nought telle my diſeſe.  
But, ſire, as of my lady ſelve,  
Though ſhe have wowers, ten or twelve,  
For no miſtruſt I have of her  
Me greveth nought, for certes, fir,  
I trowe in all this world to ſeche  
Niſ woman, that in dede and ſpeche  
Woll better ariſe her what ſhe doth,  
Ne better for to ſaie a ſothe  
Kepe her honour at alle tide  
And yet get her a thank beſide.  
But netheles I am beknowe,  
That whan I ſe at any throwe  
Or elles if I may it here,  
That ſhe make any man good chere,  
Though I therof have nought to done,  
My thought woll entermete him ſone.  
For though I be my ſelven ſtraunge  
Envie maketh min herte chaunge,  
That I am ſorwefully beſtad  
Of that I ſe another glad  
With her, but of other all  
Of love what ſo may befall,  
Or that he faile or that he ſpede,  
Therof take I but litel hede.

Nowe have I said, my fader, all,  
 As of this point in speciall  
 As ferforthly as I have wiste.  
 Now axeth, fader, what you liste

Confessor.

My sone, er I axe any more  
 I thenke somdele for thy lore  
 Tell an ensample of this matere  
 Touchend envy, as thou shalt here.

Write in Civile this I finde,  
 Though it be nought the houndes kinde  
 To ete chaff, yet woll he werne  
 An oxe, which cometh to the berne,  
 Therof to taken any fode.  
 And thus who that it understode  
 It stant of love in many a place.  
 Who that is out of loves grace  
 And may him selven nought availe,  
 He wold an other sholde faile.  
 And if he may put any lette,  
 He doth al that he may to lette.  
 Wherof I finde, as thou shalt wit,  
 To this purpos a tale write.

Hic ponit confessor  
 exemplum saltem  
 contra istos, qui in  
 amoris causa aliorum  
 gaudiis invidentes ne-  
 quaquam per hoc sibi  
 ipsis proficiunt. Et  
 narrat, qualiter qui-  
 dam juvenis miles  
 nomine Acis, quem  
 Galathea nimpha  
 pulcherrima toto cor-  
 de peramavit, cum  
 ipsi sub quadam rupe

There ben of suche mo than twelve,  
 That ben nought able as of hem selve  
 To get love, and for none envie  
 Upon all other they aspie.  
 And for hem lacketh that they wolde,  
 They kepte that none other sholde  
 Touchend of love his cause spede,  
 Wherof a great ensample I rede,

Whiche unto this mater accordeth,  
 As Ovid in his boke recordeth,  
 How Poliphemus whilom wrought,  
 Whan that he Galathe besought  
 Of love, whiche he may nought lacche,  
 That made him for to waite and wacche  
 By alle waies howe it ferde,  
 Till at the last he knewe and herde,  
 How that an other hadde leve  
 To love there, as he mot leve,  
 As for to speke of any spede,  
 So that he knew none other rede,  
 But for to waiten upon alle  
 Till he may se the chaunce falle,  
 That he her love mighte greve,  
 Whiche he him self may nought acheve.  
 This Galathe, saith the poete,  
 Above all other was unmete  
 Of beaute, that men thanne knewe,  
 And had a lusty love and trewe  
 A bacheler in his degre  
 Right such an other as was she,  
 On whom she hath her herte set,  
 So that it mighte nought be let  
 For yifte ne for no beheste,  
 That she ne was all at his heste.  
 This yonge knight Acis was hote,  
 Whiche her ayeinwarde also hote  
 All only loveth and no mo.  
 Herof was Poliphemus wo

juxta litus maris colloquium adinvicem habuerunt, Poliphemus gigas concussa rupe magnam inde partem super caput Acis ab alto projiciens ipsum per invidiam interfecit. Et cum ipse super hoc dictam Galatheam rapere voluisset, Neptunus giganti obstitens ipsam inviolatam salva custodia preservavit. Sed et dii miserti corpus Acis defuncti in fontem aque dulcissime subito transmutarunt.



Through pure envie and ever aspide  
And waiteth upon every side,  
Whan he to-gider mighte se  
This yonge Acis with Galathe.  
So longe he waiteth to and fro,  
Till at the laste he founde hem two  
In prive place, where they stood  
To speke and have her wordes good.  
The place, where as he hem sigh,  
It was under a banke nigh  
The great se, and he above  
Stood and behelde the lusty love,  
Whiche eche of hem to other made  
With goodly chere and wordes glade,  
That all his hert hath sette a fire  
Of pure envie. And as a vire,  
Which flieth out of a mighty bowe,  
Away he fledde for a throwe,  
As he that was for love wode,  
Whan that he sigh how that it stode.  
This Polipheme a geaunt was.  
And whan he sigh the sothe cas,  
How Galathe him hath forsake  
And Acis to her love take,  
His herte may it nought forbere,  
That he ne roreth as a bere  
And as it were a wilde beaft,  
In whom no reson might areste.  
He ranne Ethna the hill about,  
Where never yet the fire was out,

Fulfilled of sorwe and great difese,  
That he sigh Acis well at ese.  
Till ate last he him bethoughte  
As he, which all envie soughte,  
And torneth to the banke ayein,  
Where he with Galathe hath sein  
That Acis, whom he thought greve,  
Though he him self may nought releve.  
This geaunt with his rude might  
Part of the banke he shof down right,  
The whiche even upon Acis fell,  
So that with falling of this hill  
This Poliphemus Acis slough,  
Wherof she made sorwe inough.  
And as she fledde from the londe,  
Neptunus toke her by the honde  
And kept her in so faste a place  
Fro Polipheme and his manace,  
That he with his false envie  
Ne might atteigne her compaignie.  
This Galathe, of whom I speke  
That of her self may nought be wreke,  
Without any semblaunt feigned  
She hath her loves deth compleigned,  
And with her sorwe and with her wo  
She hath the goddes moved so,  
That they of pite and of grace  
Have Acis in the same place,  
There he lay dede, into a welle  
Transformed, as the bokes telle,

With freshe stremes and with clere,  
 As he whilom with lusty chere  
 Was freshe his love for to queme.  
 And with this rude Polipheme  
 For his envie and for his hate  
 They were wroth and thus algate.

Confessor. My sone, thou might understonde,  
 That if thou wolt in grace stonde  
 With love, thou must leve envie.  
 And as thou wolt for thy partie  
 Toward thy love stonde fre,  
 So must thou suffre another be  
 What so befall upon thy chaunce.  
 For it is an unwise vengeance  
 Which to none other man is lese  
 And is unto him selve grefe.

Amans. My fader, this ensample is good,  
 But how so ever that it stood  
 With Poliphemus love as tho,  
 It shall nought stonde with me so  
 To worchen any felonie  
 In love for no sliche envie.  
 Forthy if there ought elles be,  
 Now axeth forth, in what degre  
 It is, and I me shall confesse  
 With shrifte unto your holinesse.

2. *Vita sibi solito mentalia gaudia livor  
 Dum videt alterius damna doloris agit.  
 Invidus obridet bodie fletus aliorum,  
 Fletus cui proprios crastina fata parant.*



*Sic in amore pari stat sorte jocosus, amantes  
Cum vidit illusos invidus ille quasi.  
Sic licet in vacuum sperat tamen ipse levamen,  
Alterius casu lapsus et ipse simul.*

My gode sone, yet there is  
A vice revers unto this,  
Whiche envious taketh his gladnesse  
Of that he seeth the hevinesse  
Of other men. For his welfare  
Is, whan he wote another care  
Of that an other hath a falle,  
He thenketh him selfe arise with alle.  
Suche is the gladship of envie  
In worldes thinges and in partie,  
Full ofte times eke also  
In loves cause it stant right so.  
If thou, my sone, hast joie had,  
Whan thou an other sigh unglad,  
Shrive the therof. My fader, yis.  
I am beknowe unto you this  
Of these lovers that loven streite,  
And for that point, which they coveite,  
Ben pursuauntes from yere to yere  
In loves court, when I may here,  
How that they climbe upon the whele,  
And whan they wene all shall be wele,  
They ben down throwen ate laste,  
Than am I fed of that they faste  
And laugh, of that I se hem loure.  
And thus of that they brewe soure

Hic loquitur confessor de secunda specie invidie, que gaudium alterius doloris dicitur, et primo eiusdem vicii materiam tractans amantis conscientiam super eodem ulterius investigat.

Amans.

I drinke fwete and am well esed  
 Of that I wote they ben dised.  
 But this whiche I you telle here  
 Is only for my lady dere,  
 That for none other, that I knowe,  
 Me recheth nought who overthrqwe,  
 Ne who that stonde in love upright,  
 But be he squier, be he knight,  
 Which to my lady warde purfueth  
 The more he lost of that he sueth,  
 The more me thenketh that I winne.  
 And am the more glad withinne  
 Of that I wote him sorwe endure,  
 For ever upon suche aventure  
 It is a comfort as men fain  
 To him, the which is wo besein  
 To sene an other in his peine.  
 So that they bothe may compleine,  
 Where I myself may nought availe.  
 To sene an other man travaile  
 I am right glad if he be let.  
 And though I fare nought the bet,  
 His sorwe is to min herte a game,  
 Whan that I knowe it is the same,  
 Which to my lady stant enclined  
 And hath his love nought terminated,  
 I am right joyfull in my thought,  
 If such envie greveth ought.  
 As I beknowe me coupable,  
 Ye that be wise and resonable,

Boecius. Conclu-  
 sio miserorum est  
 habere confortem  
 in pena.



My fader, telleth your avise.

My sone, envie into no prise  
Of such a forme I understonde  
Ne mighte by no reson stonde.  
For this envie hath such a kinde,  
That he woll set him self behinde  
To hinder with another wight  
And gladly lese his owne right  
To make another lese his.

And for to knowen how so it is  
A tale lich to his matere  
I thenke telle, if thou wolte here,  
To shewe properly the vice  
Of this envie and the malice.

Of Jupiter thus I finde iwrite,  
How whilom that he wolde wite  
Upon the pleinte, whiche he herde  
Among the men, how that it ferde  
As of her wrong condicion  
To do justificacion.

And for that cause down he sent  
An aungel, which aboute went,  
That he the sothe knowe may.

So it befell upon a day  
This aungel, which him shuld enforme,  
Was clothed in a mannes forme  
And overtoke, I understonde,  
Two men, that wenten over londe,  
Through which he thoughte to aspie  
His cause and goth in compaignie.

Confessor.

Hic ponit confessor exemplum contra illum, qui sponte sui ipsius detrimentum in alterius penam maiorem patitur, et narrat, quod cum Jupiter angelum suum in forma hominis, ut hominum condiciones exploraret, ab excelsu in terram misit, contigit, quod ipse angelus duos homines, quorum unus cupidus et alter invidus erat, itinerando spacio quasi unius diei committabatur. Et cum sero factum esset, angelus eorum noticie se ipsum tunc manifestans dixit, quod quid alter eorum ab ipso donari sibi pecierit, illud statim obtinebit, quod et socio suo secum comitanti affirmat duplicandum. Super



quo cupidus impeditus avaricia sperans sibi divicias carpere duplicatas primo petere recusavit. Quod cum invidus animadverteret naturam sui vicii concernens, ita ut socius suus utroque lumine privaretur, se ipsum monoculum fieri constanter primus ab angelo postulabat. Et sic unius invidia alterius avariciam maculavit.

This aungel with his wordes wise  
Opposeth hem in sondry wise  
Now loude wordes and now softe,  
That made hem to desputen ofte.  
And eche of hem his reson hadde.  
And thus with tales he hem ladde  
With good examinacion,  
Till he knew the condicion  
What men they were bothe two  
And figh wel ate laste tho,  
That one of hem was coveitous,  
And his felaw was envious.  
And thus, whan he hath knouleching,  
Anone he feigned departing  
And said he mote algate wende.  
But herken now what fell at ende,  
For than he made hem understonde,  
That he was there of goddes sonde,  
And said hem for the kindeship,  
That they have done him felasship,  
He wolde do some grace ayein,  
And bad that one of hem shuld sain,  
What thinge him is levest to crave  
And he it shall of yifte have.  
And over that eke forth with all  
He saith that other have shall  
The double of that his felawe axeth.  
And thus to hem his grace he taxeth.  
The coveitous was wonder glad  
And to that other man he bad

And faith, that he first axe sholde.  
For he supposeth, that he wolde  
Make his axing of worldes good.  
For than he knewe well howe it stood,  
That he him self by double weight  
Shall este take, and thus by sleight  
By cause that he wolde winne  
He badde his felaw first beginne.  
This envious, though it be late  
Whan that he sigh he mote algate  
Make his axinge first, he thought,  
If he worship or profit sought,  
It shall be doubled to his fere  
That wold he chese in no manere.  
But than he sheweth what he was  
Towarde envie, and in this cas  
Unto this aungel thus he saide  
And for his yifte this he praide  
To make him blinde on his one eye,  
So that his felaw no thing sigh.  
This word was nought so sone spoke,  
That his one eye anon was loke,  
And his felaw forth with also  
Was blinde on both his eyen two.  
Tho was that other gladde inough,  
That one wept, and that other lough,  
He set his one eye at no cost,  
Wherof that other two hath lost.  
Of thilke ensample, which fell tho,  
Men tellen now full ofte so.

The worlde empeireth comunly,  
 And yet wot none the cause why,  
 For it accordeth nought to kinde  
 Min owne harme to seche and finde,  
 Of that I shall my brother greve  
 I might never wel acheve.

Confessor. What saist thou, sone, of this folie?

Amans. My fader, but I shulde lie  
 Upon the point, which ye have saide,  
 Yet was min herte never laide,  
 But in the wise, as I you tolde.  
 But evermore if that ye wolde  
 Ought elles to my shrifte saie  
 Touchend envie, I wolde praie.

Confessor. My sone, that shall well be do.  
 Now herken and lay thin ere to.

3. *Invidie pars est detractio pessima, pestem  
 Que magis infamem flatibus oris agit.  
 Lingue venenato sermone repercutit auris,  
 Sic ut in alterius scandala fama volat.  
 Morsibus a tergo, quos inficit ipsa fideles,  
 Vulneris ignoti sepe salute carent.  
 Sed generosus amor linguam conservat, ut eius  
 Verbum, quod loquitur, nulla sinistra gerat.*

Hic tractat confessor de tercia specie invidie, que detractio dicitur, cuius morsus vipereos lesa quam sepe fama deplangit.

Touchend as of envious brood  
 I wot nought one of alle good,  
 But netheles suche as they be  
 Yet there is one, and that is he,  
 Which cleped is detractioun.  
 And to conferme his action  
 He hath withholde malebouche,  
 Whose tunge nouthur pill ne crouche



May hire, so that he pronounce  
A plein good word withouten frounce.  
Where behinde a mannes backe,  
For though he preise, he find some lacke,  
Whiche of his tale is ay the laste  
That all the prise shall overcaste.  
And though there be no cause why,  
Yet woll he jangle nought forthy,  
As he whiche hath the heraldie  
Of hem, that usen for to lie.  
For as the nettle, whiche up renneth,  
The freshe red roses brenneth  
And maketh hem fade and pale of hewe,  
Right so this fals envious hewe  
In every place, where he dwelleth,  
With fals wordes, where he telleth,  
He torneth preising into blame  
And worship into worldes shame.  
Of such lesinge as he compasseth  
Is none so good, that he ne passeth  
Betwene his tethe and is backbited  
And through his false tunge endited.  
Lich to the sharnebudes kinde,  
Of whose nature this I finde,  
That in the hottest of the day,  
Whan comen is the mery may,  
He spret his winge and up he fleeth  
And under all aboute he seeth  
The faire lusty floures springe.  
But therof hath he no likinge.

But where he seeth of any beste  
The filthe, there he maketh his feste,  
And there upon he woll alighte,  
There liketh him none other fighte.  
Right so this jangler envious,  
Though he a man se vertuous  
And full of good condicion,  
Therof maketh he no mencion.  
But elles be it nought so lite,  
Wherof that he may set a wite,  
There renneth he with open mouth  
Behinde a man and maketh it couth.  
But all the vertue, whiche he can,  
That woll he hide of every man  
And openly the vice telle,  
As he, which of the scole of helle  
Is taught and fostred with envie.  
Of houholde and of compaignie  
Where that he hath his propre office  
To sette on every man a vice.  
How so his mouth be comely,  
His worde set evermore awry  
And faith the worste that he may.  
And in this wise now a daye  
In loves court a man may here  
Full ofte pleine of this matere,  
That many envious tale is stered,  
Where that it may nought be answered.  
But yet full ofte it is beleved,  
And many a worthy love is greved

Through backbitinge of false envie.

If thou have made fuche janglerie  
In loves court, my sone, er this,  
Shrive the therof. My fader, yis.  
But wite ye how nought openly,  
But otherwhile prively,  
Whan I my dere lady mete  
And thenke how that I am nought mete  
Unto her highe worthinesse  
And eke I se the befinesse  
Of all this yonge lusty route,  
Which all day pursue her aboute,  
And eche of hem his time awaiteth,  
And eche of hem his tale affaiteth  
All to deceive an innocent,  
Which woll nought be of her assent.  
And for men fain unknowen unkiste,  
Her thombe she holt in her fiste  
So close within her owne honde,  
That there winneth no man londe.  
She leveth nought all that she hereth  
And thus ful ofte her self she skiereth  
And is all ware of *had I wist*.  
But for all that min hert ariste,  
Whan I these comun lovers see,  
That wol nought holden hem to thre,  
But well nigh loven over al,  
Min hert is envious with all,  
And ever I am adrad of guile,  
In aunter if with any wile

Hic in amoris causa  
huius vicii crimen  
ad memoriam re-  
ducens confessor a-  
manti super eodem  
plenius opponit.



They might her innocence enchaunte.  
 Forthy my words full ofte I haunte  
 Behinde hem so as I dare,  
 Wherof my lady may beware.  
 I say what ever cometh to mouth  
 And wers I wolde, if that I couth.  
 For whan I come unto her speche  
 All that I may enquire and seche  
 Of such deceipte, I telle it all  
 And ay the worst in speciall.  
 So faine I wolde that she wist,  
 How litel they ben for to trift  
 And what they wold and what they mente,  
 So as they be of double entente,  
 Thus toward hem, that wicke mene,  
 My wicked word was ever grene.  
 And netheles the soth to telle  
 In certein if it so befelle  
 That althertrewest man ibore  
 To chese amonge a thousand score,  
 Which were all fully for to triste,  
 My lady loved, and I it wiste,  
 Yet rather than he shulde spede  
 I wolde suche tales sprede  
 To my lady, if that I might,  
 That I shuld all his love unright  
 And therto wolde I do my peine.  
 For certes though I shulde feigne  
 And telle, that was never thought,  
 For all this worlde I might nought

To fuffre an other fully winne  
There as I am yet to beginne.  
For be they good, or be they bad  
I wolde none my lady had.  
And that me maketh full ofte aspie  
And ufen wordes of envie.  
And for to make hem bere a blame  
And that is but of thilke fame,  
The whiche unto my lady drawe,  
For ever on them I rounge and gnawe  
And hinder hem all that ever I maie.  
And that is sothly for to faie,  
But only to my lady felve,  
I telle it nought to ten ne twelve.  
Therof I wol me well avise  
To speke or jangle in any wise  
That toucheth to my ladies name,  
The whiche in ernest and in game  
I wolde fave into my deth.  
For me were lever to lacke breth  
Than speken of her name amis.  
Now have ye herd touchend of this,  
My fader, in confeffion  
And therfore of detraction  
In love, of that I have mispoke,  
Tell how ye will it fhall be wroke.  
I am all redy for to bere  
My peine, and alfo to forbere  
What thing that ye woll nought allowe.  
For who is bounden, he must bowe.

So woll I bowe unto your heft,  
 For I dare make this beheft,  
 That I to you have nothing hid,  
 But told right as it is betide,  
 And otherwife of no miſſpeche  
 My conſcience for to ſeche.  
 I can nought of envie finde,  
 That I miſſpoke have ought behinde,  
 Wherof love ought be miſpaide.  
 Now have ye herde and I have ſaide,  
 What woll ye fader, that I do?

*Confellor.* My ſone, do no more ſo,  
 But ever kepe thy tunge ſtill,  
 Thou might the more have thy will.  
 For as thou ſaiſt thy ſelven here,  
 My lady is of ſuch manere,  
 So wiſe, ſo ware in alle thinges,  
 It nedeth of no bakbitinges,  
 That thou thy lady miſenforme.  
 For whan ſhe knoweth all the forme,  
 How that thy ſelf art envious,  
 Thou ſhalt nought be ſo gracious,  
 As thou paraunter ſhuldeſt be elles.  
 There wol no man drinke of the welles,  
 Whiche as he wote is poiſon inne.  
 And ofte ſuche as men beginne  
 Towardes other, ſuch they finde,  
 That ſet hem ofte ſer behinde,  
 Whan that they wenen be before.  
 My gode ſone, and thou therfore



Be ware and leve thy wicked speche,  
 Wherof hath fallen ofte wreche  
 To many a man before this time.  
 For who so wol his hondes lime,  
 They musten be the more unclene.  
 For many a mote shall be sene,  
 That woll nought cleve elles there.  
 And that shulde every wise man fere.  
 For who so woll another blame,  
 He seketh ofte his owne shame,  
 Which elles might be right stille.  
 Forthy if that it be thy wille  
 To stonde upon amendement,  
 A tale of great entendement  
 I thenke telle for thy sake,  
 Wherof thou might ensample take.

A worthy knight in Cristes lawe  
 Of great Rome, as is the sawe,  
 The sceptre hadde for to right,  
 Tibery Constantin he hight,  
 Whos wife was cleped Italie.  
 But they to-gider of progenie  
 No children hadde but a maide.  
 And she the god so wel apaide,  
 That al the wide worldes fame  
 Spake worship of her gode name.  
 Constance, as the cronique saith,  
 She hight and was so full of faith,  
 That the greatest of Barbarie  
 Of hem, whiche usen marchandie,

Hic loquitur confessor  
 contra istos in amoris  
 causa detrahentes, qui  
 suis obloquiis aliena  
 solacia perturbant, et  
 narrat exemplum de  
 Constantia Tiberii  
 Rome imperatoris fi-  
 lia omnium virtutum  
 famosissima. Ob eius  
 amorem soldanus  
 tunc Persie, ut eam  
 in uxorem ducere pos-  
 set, christianum se fieri  
 promisit, cuius accep-  
 ta cautione consilio  
 Pelagii tunc pape  
 dicta filia una cum  
 duobus cardinalibus  
 aliisque Rome pro-  
 ceribus in Persiam  
 maritagii causa navi-  
 gio honorifice desti-  
 nata fuit, que tamen  
 obloquencium postea

detractionibus variis  
modis prout inferius  
articulatur absque sui  
culpa dolorosa fata  
multipliciter passa est.

She hath converted, as they come  
To her upon a time in Rome  
To shewen such thing, as they brought,  
Which worthely of hem she bought.  
And over that in fuche a wise  
She hath hem with her wordes wise  
Of Cristes feith so full enformed,  
That they therto ben all conformed,  
So that baptisme they receiven  
And all her false goddes weiven.

Whan they ben of the feith certein,  
They gone to Barbarie ayein,  
And there the souldan for hem sente  
And axeth hem to what entente  
They have her firste feith forsake.  
And they, whiche hadden undertake  
The righte feith to kepe and holde,  
The mater of her tale tolde  
With all the hole circumstaunce.  
And whan the souldan of Constaunce  
Upon the point that they answerde  
The beaute and the grace herde  
As he, which thanne was to wedde,  
In alle haste his cause spedde  
To sende for the mariage.  
And furthermore with good corage  
He saith, be so he may her have  
That Crist, that came this world to save,  
He woll beleve, and thus recorded  
They ben on either side accorded.



And there upon to make an ende  
 The souldan his hostages sende  
 To Rome, of princes sones twelve.  
 Wherof the fader in him selve  
 Was glad, and with the pope avised  
 Two cardinales he hath assised  
 With other lordes many mo,  
 That with his doughter shulden go  
 To se the souldan be converted.

But that which never was wel herted  
 Envie tho began to travaile  
 In disturbaunce of this spoufaile  
 So prively that none was ware.  
 The moder, which the souldan bare,  
 Was than alive and thoughte this  
 Unto her selfe: if it so is,  
 My sone him wedde in this manere,  
 Than have I lost my joies here,  
 For min estate shall so be lassed.  
 Thenkend thus she hath compassed  
 By sleight how that she may beguile  
 Her sone, and fell within a while  
 Betwene hem two whan that they were,  
 She feigned wordes in his ere  
 And in this wise gan to say:

My sone, I am by double way  
 With all min herte glad and blithe,  
 For that my selfe have ofte sithe  
 Desired thou wolte, as men saith,  
 Receive and take a newe feith,

Qualiter adveniente  
 Constancia in Barba-  
 riam mater soldani  
 huiusmodi nupcias  
 perturbare volens fi-  
 lium suum una cum  
 dicta Constancia car-  
 dinalibusque et aliis  
 Romanis primo die  
 ad convivium invita-  
 vit, et convalescentibus  
 illis in mensa ipsum  
 soldanum omnesque  
 ibidem preter Con-  
 stanciam Romanos ab  
 insidiis latitantibus  
 subdola detractione  
 interfici procuravit  
 ipsamque Constanci-  
 am in quadam navi  
 absque gubernaculo  
 positam per altum  
 mare ventorum flati-  
 bus agitandam in ex-  
 ilium dirigi solam  
 constituit.



Which shall be forthringe of thy life.  
 And eke so worshipfull a wife  
 The doughter of an emperour  
 To wedde it shall be great honour.  
 Forthy my sone, I you beseeche,  
 That I such grace might areche,  
 Whan that my doughter come shall,  
 That I may than in speciall  
 So as me thenketh it is honeste  
 Be thilke, which the firste feste  
 Shall make unto her welcominge.

The fouldan graunteth her axinge.  
 And she therof was gladde inough,  
 For under that anone she drough  
 With false wordes that she spake  
 Covin of dethe behinde his backe.  
 And therupon her ordinaunce  
 She made so, that whan Constance  
 Was comen forth with the Romains  
 Of clerkes and of citezeins,  
 A riche feste she hem made.  
 And moste whan they weren glade  
 With false covin, which she hadde,  
 Her close envie tho she spradde.  
 And alle tho, that hadden be  
 Or in appert or in prive  
 Of counseil to the mariage,  
 She slough hem in a sodein rage  
 Endlong the borde as they be set,  
 So that it mighte nought be let

Her owne sone was nought quite,  
But died upon the same plite.  
But what the highe god woll spare  
It may for no perill misfare.  
This worthy maiden, which was there,  
Stode than as who faith dede for fere  
To se the fest, how that it stood,  
Whiche all was torned into blood.  
The dissh forth with the cuppe and all  
Bebled they weren over all.  
She sigh hem die on every side,  
No wonder though she wepte and cride  
Makend many a wofull mone.  
Whan all was slain but she al one,  
This olde fend, this Sarazin  
Let take anone this Constantin  
With all the good she thider brought  
And hath ordeigned as she thought  
A naked ship withoute stere,  
In which the good and her in fere  
Vitaled full for yeres five,  
Where that the winde it wolde drive,  
She put upon the waves wilde.

But he, which alle thinges may shilde,  
Thre yere til that she cam to londe  
Her ship to stere hath take on honde,  
And in Northumberlond arriveth,  
And happeth thanne that she driveth  
Under a castell with the flood,  
Whiche upon Humber banke stood.

Qualiter navis cum  
Constancia in partes  
Anglie, que tunc pa-  
gana fuit, prope Hum-  
ber sub quodam cas-  
tello regis, qui tunc  
Allee vocabatur, post  
triennium applicuit,  
quam quidam miles  
nomine Elda dicti  
castelli tunc custos e  
navi lete suscipiens

uxori sue Hermingelde in custodiam honorifice commendavit.

And was the kinges owne also,  
 The whiche Allee was cleped tho,  
 A Saxon and a worthy knight,  
 But he beleveth nought aright.  
 Of this castell was castellaine  
 Elda the kinges chamberlaine,  
 A knightly man after his lawe.  
 And whan he figh upon the wawe  
 The ship drivend alone so,  
 He badde anone men shulden go  
 To se, what it betoken may.  
 This was upon a somer day,  
 The ship was lokend and she founde.  
 Elda within a litel stounde  
 It wist and with his wife anone  
 Toward this yonge lady gone,  
 Where that they founde great richesse.  
 But she her wolde nought confesse,  
 Whan they her axen what she was.  
 And netheles upon the cas  
 Out of the ship with great worship  
 They toke her into felaship  
 As they, that weren of her glade.  
 But she no maner joie made,  
 But forweth sore of that she fonde  
 No christendome in thilke londe.  
 But elles she hath all her will,  
 And thus with hem she dwelleth still.  
 Dame Hermegild, which was the wife  
 Of Elda, liche her owne life



Constance loveth, and fell so  
 Spekend all day betwene hem two  
 Through grace of goddes purveiaunce  
 This maiden taught the creaunce  
 Unto this wife so parfitly,  
 Upon a day that faste by  
 In presence of her husbonde,  
 Where they go walkend on the stronde,  
 A blinde man, which cam ther ladde,  
 Unto this wife criend he badde  
 With bothe his hondes up and praide  
 To her and in this wife he saide :  
 O Hermegilde, which Cristes feith  
 Enformed, as Constance saith,  
 Received hast : yif me my sight.

Upon this worde her herte aflight  
 Thenkend what was beste to done,  
 But netheles she herde his bone  
 And saide : in trust of Cristes lawe,  
 Which done was on the crosse and flawe,  
 Thou blinde man beholde and se.  
 With that to God upon his kne  
 Thonkend he toke his sight anone,  
 Wherof they merveil everychone.  
 But Elda wondreth most of alle,  
 This open thing whiche is befalle  
 Concludeth him by suche a way,  
 That he the feith mo nede obey.

Now list what fell upon this thinge.  
 This Elda forth unto the kinge

Qualiter Constan-  
 cia Eldam cum ux-  
 ore sua, qui antea  
 Christiani non ex-  
 titerant, ad fidem  
 Christi miraculose  
 convertit.

Qualiter quidam mi-  
 les juvenis in amorem  
 Constance exardet.

cens, pro eo quod ipsa assentire noluit, eam de morte Hermegilde, quam ipse noctanter interfecit, verbis detractoriis accusavit, sed angelus domini ipsum sic detrahentem in maxilla subito percutiens non solum pro mendace comprobavit, sed istu mortali post ipsius confessionem penitus interfecit.

A morwe toke his way and rode,  
 And Hermegild at home abode  
 Forth with Constance well at ese.  
 Elda, which thought his king to plese  
 As he, that than unwedded was,  
 Of Constance all the pleine cas  
 As godelich as he couth tolde.  
 The king was glad and said he wolde  
 Come thider in suche a wise,  
 That he him might of her avise.  
 The time appointed forth withall  
 This Elda truste in speciall  
 Upon a knight, which fro childhode  
 He had updrawe into manhode.  
 To him he tolde all that he thought,  
 Wherof that after him forthought.  
 And netheles at thilke tide  
 Unto his wife he bad him ride  
 To make redy alle thinge  
 Ayeinst the cominge of the kinge,  
 And saith that he him self to-fore  
 Thenketh for to come and bad therfore,  
 That he him kepe and tolde him whan.  
 This knight rode forth his waie than.  
 And soth was, that of time passed  
 He had in all his wit compassed,  
 Howe he Constance mighte winne.  
 But he sigh tho no speede therinne.  
 Wherof his lust began to abate,  
 And that was love is thanne hate.

Of her honour he had envie,  
So that upon his trecherie  
A lesinge in his herte he cast,  
Til he come home, he hieth fast  
And doth his lady to understonde  
The message of her husebonde.  
And therupon the longe daie  
They setten thinges in arraie,  
That all was as it shulde be  
Of every thinge in his degre.  
And whan it came into the night,  
This wife her hath to bedde dight,  
Where that this maiden with her lay.  
This false knight upon delay,  
Hath taried till they were allepe,  
As he that woll to his time kepe  
His dedly werkes to fulfille.  
And to the bed he stalketh stille,  
Where that he wiste was the wife,  
And in his honde a rasour knife  
He bar, with whiche her throte he cut  
And prively the knife he put  
Under that other beddes fide,  
Where that Constance lay beside.  
Elda come hom the same night  
And stille with a prive light  
As he that wolde nought awake  
His wife, he hath his waie take  
Into the chambre and there liggend  
He fonde his dede wife bledend,



Where that Constance faste by  
 Was falle aslepe, and sodeinly  
 He cried aloude, and she awoke  
 And forth with all she cast a loke  
 And sigh this lady blede there,  
 Wherof swounende dede for fere  
 She was and stille as any stone  
 She laie, and Elda therupon  
 Into the castell clepeth out  
 And up sterte every man about,  
 Into the chambre forth they went.  
 But he whiche all untrouthe ment  
 This false knight among hem all  
 Upon this thing whiche is befall  
 Saith that Constance hath don this dede.  
 And to the bed with that he yede  
 After the falsehed of his speche  
 And made him there for to seche  
 And fond the knife, where he it laid.  
 And than he cried and than he said :  
 Lo, se the knife all bloody here,  
 What nedeth more in this matere  
 To axe? and thus her innocence  
 He sclaundreth there in audience  
 With false wordes, whiche he feigneth.  
 But yet for al that ever he pleineth.  
     Elda no full credence toke.  
 And happed that there lay a boke,  
 Upon the which, whan he it fighe,  
 This knight hath swore and said on highe,

That alle men it mighten wite  
 Now by this boke, which here is write,  
 Constance is gultif well I wote.  
 With that the honde of heven him smote  
 In token of that he was forswore,  
 That he has bothe his eyen lore,  
 Out of his hed the fame stounde  
 They stert, and so they were founde.  
 A vois was herd, whan that they fel,  
 Which saide: O dampned man to helle,  
 Lo, thus hath god thy sclander wroke,  
 That thou ayein Constance hath spoke,  
 Beknowe the sothe er that thou deie.  
 And he tolde out his felonie  
 And starf forth with his tale anone.  
 Into the grounde, where alle gone,  
 This dede lady was begrave.  
 Elda, which thought his honour save,  
 All that he may restreigneth forwe.

For he the second day a morwe  
 The king came, as they were accorded.  
 And whan it was to him recorded,  
 What god hath wrought upon this chaunce,  
 He toke it into remembraunce  
 And thought more than he saide,  
 For all his hole herte he laide  
 Upon Constance and saide he shulde  
 For love of her, if that she wolde,  
 Baptisme take and Cristes feith  
 Beleve and over that he saith,

Qualiter rex Allee ad  
 fidem Christi conver-  
 sus baptismum rece-  
 pit et Constanciam  
 super hoc leto animo  
 desponsavit, que ta-  
 men qualis vel unde  
 fuit alicui nullo modo  
 fatebatur, et cum in-  
 fra breve postea a do-  
 mino suo inpregnata  
 fuisset, ipse ad debel-  
 landum cum Scotis  
 iter arripuit et ibi-  
 dem super guerras ali-  
 quandiu permanfit.

He wol her wedde, and upon this  
Assured eche til other is.  
And for to make shorte tales  
There came a bisshop out of Wales  
Fro Bangor, and Lucie he hight,  
Which through the grace of god almight  
The king with many an other mo  
He cristned, and betwene hem two  
He hath fulfilled the mariage.  
But for no lust, ne for no rage  
She tolde hem never what she was.  
And netheles upon this cas  
The king was glad, how so it stood,  
For well he wist and understood  
She was a noble creature.  
The highe maker of nature  
Her hath visited in a throwe,  
That it was openliche knowe,  
She was with childe by the kinge,  
Wherof above all other thinge  
He thonketh god and was right glad.  
And fell that time he was bestad  
Upon a werre and must ride.  
And while he shulde there abide,  
He left at home to kepe his wife  
Suche as he knewe of holy life,  
Elda forth with the bisshop eke.  
And he with power go to seke  
Ayein the Scottes for to fonde  
The werre, whiche he toke on honde.



The time fet of kinde is come,  
 This lady hath her chambre nome  
 And of a sone bore fulle,  
 Wherof that she was joiefull,  
 She was delivered sauf and sone.  
 The bisshop, as it was to done,  
 Yaf him baptisme and Moris calleth.  
 And therupon as it befalleth  
 With letters writen of recorde  
 They send unto her lege lorde  
 That kepers weren of the quene.  
 And he, that shulde go betwene,  
 The messanger to Knaresburgh,  
 Which town he shulde passe thurgh,  
 Ridende cam the first daie  
 The kinges moder there lay,  
 Whose right name was Domilde,  
 Whiche after all the cause spilde.  
 For he, which thonk deserve wolde,  
 Unto this lady goth and tolde  
 Of his message al how it ferde.  
 And she with feigned joie it herde  
 And yaf him yestes largely,  
 But in the night al prively  
 She toke the letters, whiche he had,  
 Fro point to point and overrad  
 As she, that was through out untrewe,  
 And let do writen other newe  
 In stede of hem, and thus they speke.  
 Our lege lord, we the beseke,

Qualiter regina Con-  
 stancia infantem maf-  
 culum, quem in bap-  
 tismo Mauricium vo-  
 cant, rege absente  
 enixa est, sed invida  
 mater regis Domilda  
 super isto facto con-  
 dolens mendacibus  
 regi certificavit, quod  
 uxor sua demoniaci et  
 non humani generis  
 quoddam monstruo-  
 sum fantasma loco  
 geniture adortum  
 produxit, huiusmodi-  
 que detractoribus ad-  
 versus Constanciam  
 in tanto procuravit,  
 quod ipsa in navem,  
 qua prius venerat, ite-  
 rum ad exilium una  
 cum suo partu re-  
 missa desolabatur.

Prima littera in  
 commendacionem

Constancie ab episcopo regi missa per Domildam in contrarium falsata.

That thou with us ne be nought wroth,  
 Though we such thing, as is the loth,  
 Upon our trouthe certifie.  
 Thy wife, whiche is of fairie,  
 Of suche a child delivered is  
 Fro kinde, which stant all amis.  
 But for it shulde nought be saie  
 We have it kept out of the waie  
 For drede of pure worldes shame,  
 A pouer childe, and in the name  
 Of thilke, whiche is so misbore,  
 We toke and therto we be swore,  
 That none but only you and we  
 Shall knowen of this privete.  
 Morice it hat, and thus men wene,  
 That it was bore of the quene  
 And of thine owne bodie gete.  
 But this thing may nought be foryete,  
 That thou ne sende us worde anone,  
 What is thy wille therupon.

This letter, as thou hast herd devise,  
 Was counterfet in suche a wise,  
 That no man shulde it apperceive.  
 And she, which thought to deceive,  
 It laith, where she that other toke.  
 This messanger, whan he awoke,  
 And wist nothinge how it was,  
 Arose and rode the great pas  
 And toke his letter to the kinge.  
 And whan he sigh this wonder thinge,

He maketh the meſſanger no chere,  
 But netheles in wiſe manere,  
 He wrote ayein and yaf him charge,  
 That they nè ſuffre nought at large  
 His wife to go but kepe her ſtill,  
 Till they have herd more of his will.

This meſſanger was yeſteles,  
 But with his letter netheles  
 Or be him leſe or be him loth  
 In alle haſte ayeine he goth  
 By Knareſburgh, and as he went,  
 Unto the moder his entent  
 Of that he fond toward the kinge  
 He tolde, and ſhe upon this thinge  
 Saith, that he ſhulde abide all night  
 And made him feſte and chere aright,  
 Feignend as though ſhe couthe him thonke.  
 But he with ſtrong wine which he dronke  
 Forth with the travaile of the day  
 Was drunke aſlepe, and while he lay,  
 She hath his letters overſay  
 And formed in an other way,  
 There was a newe letter write,

Which ſaith: I do you for to wite,  
 That through the counſeil of you two  
 I ſtonde in point to ben undo  
 As he, whiche is a king depoſed,  
 For every man it hath ſuppoſed,  
 How that my wife Conſtance is fay.  
 And if that I, they ſain, delay

*Secunda littera per  
 regem episcopo re-  
 miſſa a Domilda  
 iterum falſata.*



To put her out of compaignie,  
 The worship of my regalie  
 Is lore, and over this they telle,  
 Her child shal nought among hem dwelle  
 To claimen any heritage.  
 So can I se none avauntage,  
 But all is lost, if she abide.  
 Forthy to loke on every side  
 Toward the mischefe as it is  
 I charge you and bidde this,  
 That ye the same ship vittaile,  
 In which that she toke arrivaile,  
 Therin and putteth bothe two  
 Her self forth with her childe also,  
 And so forth brought into the depe  
 Betaketh her the see to kepe.  
 Of foure daies time I set,  
 That ye this thing no lenger let,  
 So that your life be nought forfete.

And thus this letter counterfete  
 The messanger, which was unaware,  
 Upon the kinges halve bare  
 And where he shulde it hath betake.  
 But whan that they have hede take  
 And rad, that writen is withinne,  
 So great a sorwe they beginne,  
 As they her owne moder fighen  
 Brent in a fire before her eyen.  
 There was wepinge and there was wo,  
 But finally the thinge is do.

Upon the see they have her brought,  
But she the cause wiste nought,  
And thus upon the flood they wone  
This lady with her yonge sone.  
And than her hondes to the heven  
She straught and with a milde steven  
Knelend upon her bare kne  
She saide : O high mageste,  
Which seest the point of every trouth,  
Take of thy wofull woman routh  
And of this child, that I shal kepe.  
And with that word she gan to wepe  
Swounend as dede, and there she lay.  
But he, whiche alle thinges may,  
Conforteth her, and ate laste  
She loketh and her eyen caste  
Upon her childe and sayde this :  
Of me no maner charge it is  
What sorwe I suffre, but of the  
Me thenketh it is great pite,  
For if I sterue thou shalt deie,  
So mote I nedes by that weie  
For moderhed and for tendereffe  
With all min hole besinesse  
Ordeigne me for thilke office  
As she, which shall be thy norice.  
Thus was she strengthed for to stonde.  
And tho she toke her childe in honde  
And yaf it souke and ever amonge  
She wepte and otherwhile songe.

To rocke with her childe aslepe,  
And thus her owne childe to kepe  
She hath under the goddes cure.

*Qualiter navis  
Constancie post bi-  
ennium in partes  
Hispanie superioris  
inter Sarazenos jac-  
tabatur, a quorum  
manibus deus ipsam  
conservans gratio-  
sissime liberavit.*

And so fell upon aventure,  
Whan thilke yere hath made his ende,  
Her ship, so as it moste wende,  
By strength of wind which god hath yive  
Estward was into Spaine drive  
Right fast under a castell walle,  
Where that an hethen admiral  
Was lorde, and he a steward had  
One Thelous, whiche al was bad,  
A fals knight and a renegade.  
He goth to loke, in what estate  
The ship was comen, and there he fonde  
Forth with a childe upon her honde  
This lady, where she was alone.  
He toke good hede of the persone  
And sigh she was a worthy wight  
And thought he wolde upon the night  
Demene her at his owne wille,  
And let her be therinne stille,  
That no man sigh she nought that day.  
At goddes wille and thus she lay  
Unknowe, what her shall betide.  
And fell so that by nightes tide  
This knight withoute felaship  
Hath take a boot and cam to ship  
And thought of her his lust to take  
And swore, if she him daunger make,



That certainly she shulde deie.  
 She figh there was none other weie  
 And faide he shulde her well conforte,  
 That he first loke out at porte,  
 That no man were nigh the stede,  
 Which mighte knowe, what they dede.  
 And than he may do what he wolde.  
 He was right glad, that she so tolde,  
 And to the port anone he ferde.

She praieyth god, and he her herde.  
 And sodeinlich he was out throwe  
 And dreint, and tho began to blowe  
 Winde mevable fro the londe,  
 And thus the mighty goddes honde  
 Her hath conveied and defended.  
 And whan thre yere ben full despended,

Her ship was drive upon a daie,  
 Where that a great navie laie  
 Of shippes, all the worlde at ones.  
 And as god wolde for the nones,  
 Her ship goth in amonge hem alle  
 And stint nought, er it befalle  
 And hath that vessel under gete,  
 Which maister was of all the flete.  
 But there it resteth and abode.  
 This grete ship on anker rode,  
 The lord come forth, and whan he figh  
 That other ligge on bord so nigh  
 He wondreth, what it mighte be,  
 And bad men to go in and se.

Qualiter navicula  
 Constancie quodam  
 die per altum mare  
 vagans inter copio-  
 sam navium multitu-  
 dinem dilapsa est,  
 quarum Arcennius  
 Romanorum consul,  
 dux et capitaneus ip-  
 sam ignotam suscipi-  
 ens usque ad Romam  
 secum perduxit, ubi  
 equalem uxori sue  
 Elene permanfuram  
 reverenter associavit  
 nec non et eiusdem  
 filium Mauricium in  
 omni habundancia  
 quasi proprium edu-  
 cavit.

This lady tho was crope a fide  
As she, that wolde her selven hide,  
For she ne wiste, what they were.  
They fought about and fond her there  
And broughten up her childe and her.  
And therupon this lord to spire  
Began, fro whenne that she came  
And what she was. Quod she: I am  
A woman woefully bestad.  
I had a lorde, and thus he bad,  
That I forth with my litel sone  
Upon the waves shulde wone.  
But why the cause was I not,  
But he whiche alle thinges wot  
Yet hath, I thonk him, of his might  
My childe and me so kepte upright,  
That we be fause bothe two.  
This lorde her axeth evermo  
How she beleveth, and she saith:  
I leve and trust in Cristes feith,  
Which died upon the rode tre.  
What is thy name, tho quod he?  
My name is Custe, she him saide.  
But furthermore for nought he praide  
Of her estate to knowe pleine  
She wolde him nothing elles saine  
But of her name, which she feigned,  
All other thinges she restreigned,  
That o word more she ne tolde.  
This lord than axeth if she wolde

With him abide in compaignie  
And faide, he came from Barbarie  
To Rome ward and home he went.  
Tho ſhe ſuppoſeth what it ment  
And ſaith, ſhe wolde with him wende  
And dwelle unto her lives ende,  
If it ſo be to his pleaſaunce.  
And thus upon her acquaintance  
He tolde her plainly as it ſtood,  
Of Rome how that the gentil blood  
In Barbarie was betrayed  
And therupon he hath aſſaied  
By werre and taken ſuch vengeance,  
That none of thilke alliaunce,  
By whom the treſon was compaſſed,  
Is from the ſwerd alive paſſed.  
But of Conſtance how it was  
That couthe he knowe by no cas  
Where ſhe becam, ſo as he ſaid  
Her ere unto his word ſhe laid,  
But furthermore made ſhe no chere.  
And netheles in this matere  
It happed that ilke time ſo  
This lord, with whom ſhe ſhulde go,  
Of Rome was the ſenatour  
And of her fader themperour  
His brother doughter hath to wive,  
Which hath her fader eke on live,  
And was Saluſtes cleped tho,  
His wife Heleine hight alſo,



To whom Cōstance was coufine.  
 Thus to the like a medicine  
 Hath god ordeigned of his grace,  
 That forthwith in the same place  
 This senatour his trouthe plight  
 For ever, while he live might  
 To kepe her in worship and in wele,  
 Be so that god woll yive her hele,  
 This lady, which fortune him fende.  
 And thus by ship forth sailende  
 Her and her childe to Rome be brought,  
 And to his wife tho he besought  
 To take her into compaignie.  
 And she, which couth of curtesie  
 All that a good wife shulde conne,  
 Was inly glad, that she hath wonne  
 The felaship of so good one.  
 This emperours doughter Custe  
 Forth with the doughter of Saluste  
 Was kept, but no man redely  
 Knew what she was, and nought forthy  
 They thoughten well she hadde be  
 In her estate of high degre,  
 And every life her loveth wele.

Qualiter rex Allee  
 inita pace cum  
 Scotis a guerris  
 rediens et non in-  
 venta uxore sua  
 causam exilii dili-  
 gencius persequen-  
 tans, cum matrem  
 suam Domildam  
 inde culpabilem  
 fecivisset, ipsam in  
 igne proiciens con-  
 buri fecit.

Now herken thilke unstable whele,  
 Whiche ever torneth, went aboute.  
 The king Allee, while he was oute,  
 As thou to-fore hast herd this cas,  
 Deceived through his moder was.  
 But whan that he come home ayein,  
 He axeth of his chamberlain

And of the bisshop eke also,  
Where they the quene hadden do.  
And they answerde there he bad  
And have him thilke letter rad,  
Whiche he hem sende for warrant,  
And tolde him plainly as it stant  
And fain, it thought hem great pite  
To se a worthy one as she  
With fuche a childe, as there was bore,  
So sodeinly to be forlore.  
He axeth hem, what child that were.  
And they him saide, that no where  
In all the world, though men it fought,  
Was never woman, that forth brought  
A fairer child, than it was one.  
And than he axeth hem anone,  
Why they ne hadden writen so.  
They tolden, so they hadden do.  
He saide nay. They saiden yis.  
The letter shewed rad it is,  
Which they forfoken every dele.  
Tho was it understonde wele,  
That there is trefon in the thinge.  
The messanger to-fore the kinge  
Was brought and sodeinlich opposed  
As he, which no thinge hath supposed  
But alle wel, began to saie,  
That he no where upon the waie  
Abode but only in a stede,  
And cause why, that he so dede,

Was, as he went to and fro,  
 At Knareburgh by nightes two  
 The kinges moder made him dwelle.  
 And when the king it herde telle,  
 Within his hert he wiste als faste  
 The treson, whiche his moder caste,  
 And thought he wolde nought abide.  
 But forth right in the same tide  
 He toke his hors and rode anone,  
 With him there riden many one,  
 To Knareburgh and forth they wente  
 And lich the fire, which thonder hente,  
 In suche a rage, as faith the boke,  
 His moder sodeinlich he toke  
 And saide unto her in this wise :  
 O beste of helle, in what iuise  
 Hast thou deserved for to deie,  
 That hast so falsely put aweie  
 With treson of thy backbitinge  
 The trewest at my knouelechinge  
 Of wives and the most honest ?  
 But I wol make this behest,  
 I shall be venged or I go.  
 And let a fire do make tho  
 And bad men for to caste her inne.  
 But first she tolde out all the sinne  
 And did hem alle for to wite,  
 How she the letters hadde write  
 Fro point to point, as it was wrought.  
 And tho she was to dethe brought



And brent to-fore her fones eye,  
 Wherof theſe other, whiche it ſighe  
 And herden how the cauſe ſtood,  
 Sain, that the iugement was good,  
 Of that her ſone her hath ſo ſerved.  
 For ſhe it hadde wel deſerved  
 Through trefon of her falſe tunge,  
 Which through the lond was after ſonge,  
 Conſtance and every wight compleineth.  
 But he, whom alle wo diſtreigneth,  
 This forweſull king was ſo beſtad,  
 That he ſhall never more be glad,  
 He ſaith, eſtſone for to wedde,  
 Till that he wiſt how that ſhe ſpedde,  
 Which hadde ben his firſte wife,  
 And thus his yonge unluſty life  
 He driveth forth ſo as he may.

Till it beſel upon a day,  
 Whan he his werres hadde acheved  
 And thought he wolde be releved  
 Of ſoule hele upon the feith,  
 Whiche he hath take, than he ſaith,  
 That he to Rome in pelrinage  
 Wol go, where pope was Pelage,  
 To take his abſolucion.  
 And upon this condicion  
 He made Edwin his lieutenaunt,  
 Whiche heir to him was apparaunt,  
 That he the lond in his abſence  
 Shall reule. And thus by providence

Qualiter poſt lap-  
 ſum .xii. annorum  
 rex Allee abſolu-  
 tionis cauſa Ro-  
 mam proficiens  
 uxorem ſuam Con-  
 ſtanciam una cum  
 filio ſuo divina pro-  
 videncia ibidem le-  
 tus invenit.

Of alle thinges well begonne  
 He toke his leve and forth is gone.

Elda, which was with him tho there,  
 Er they fulliche at Rome were,  
 Was sent to-fore to purveie,  
 And he his guide upon the weie  
 In helpe to ben his herbergeour  
 Hath axed, who was senatour,  
 That he his name mighte kenne.  
 Of Capadoce, he saide, Arcenne  
 He hight and was a worthy knyght.  
 To him goth Elda tho forth right  
 And tolde him of his lord tiding  
 And praide, that for his cominge  
 He wolde assigne him herbergage.  
 And he so did of good corage.

Whan all is do, that was to done,  
 The kinge him self cam after sone.  
 This senatour whan that he come  
 To Custe and to his wife at home,  
 Hath tolde how fuche a kinge Allee  
 Of great array to the citee  
 Was come, and Cust upon his tale  
 With herte close and colour pale  
 A swoune felle, and he merveileth  
 So sodeinly what thinge her eileth  
 And caught her up, and whan she woke,  
 She fiketh with a pitous loke  
 And feigneth fikenesse of the see,  
 But it was for the kinge Allee

For joie, which fell in her thought,  
That god him hath to towne brought.  
This king hath spoke with the pope  
And tolde all that he couthe grope,  
What greveth in his conscience,  
And than he thought in reverence  
Of his estate, er that he went,  
To make a feste and thus he sent  
Unto the senatour to come  
Upon the morwe and other some  
To fitte with him at the mete.  
This tale hath Cust nought foryete.  
But to Morice her sone tolde,  
That he upon the morwe sholde  
In all that ever he couth and might  
Be present in the kinges fight,  
So that the kinge him ofte sigh.  
Morice to-fore the kinges eye  
Upon the morwe, where he sat,  
Full ofte stood, and upon that  
The king his chere upon him caste  
And in his face him thought als faste  
He sigh his owne wife Constance,  
For nature, as in ressemblaunce  
Of face, him liketh so to clothe,  
That they were of a suite bothe.  
The king was moved in his thought  
Of that he sigh and knew it nought.  
This childe he loveth kindely,  
And yet he wot no cause why.



But wel he figh and understode,  
 That he toward Arcenne stode,  
 And axeth him anone right there,  
 If that this childe his sone were.  
 He saide: ye, so I him calle,  
 And wolde it were so befallē,  
 But it is all in other wise.  
 And tho began he to devise,  
 How he the childes moder fonde  
 Upon the see from every londe  
 Within a ship was stereles,  
 And how this lady helpeles  
 Forth with her childe he hath forth drawe.  
 The kinge hath understood his sawe  
 The childes name and axeth tho,  
 And what the moder hight also,  
 That he him wolde telle he praide.  
 Morice this childe is hote, he saide,  
 His moder hat Custe, and this  
 I not what maner name it is.  
 But Allee wiste wel inough,  
 Wherof somdele smilend he lough.  
 For Custe in Saxon is to faine  
 Constance upon the word Romaine.  
 But who that couthe specifie,  
 What tho fell in his fantasie,  
 And how his witte aboute renneth  
 Upon the love, in which he brenneth,  
 It were a wonder for to here.  
 For he was nouthere there ne here,

But clene out of him selfe away,  
That he not what to thenke or say.  
So faine he wolde it were she,  
Wherof his hertes private  
Began the werre of ye and nay,  
The whiche in such balaunce lay,  
That contenaunce for a throwe  
He losfe, till he mighte knowe  
The soth. But in his memoire  
The man, which lieth in purgatoire,  
Defireth nought the heven more,  
That he ne longeth also fore  
To wite, what him shall betide.  
And whan the bordes were aside  
And every man was rise aboute,  
The kinge hath weived all the route  
And with the senatour alone  
He spake and praid him of a bone,  
To se this Custe where she dwelleth  
At home with him, so as he telleth.  
The senatour was wel apaide.  
This thing no lenger was delaide.  
To se this Custe goth the kinge,  
And she was warned of the thinge,  
And with Heleine forth she came  
Ayein the kinge, and he tho name  
Good hede, and whan he sigh his wife,  
Anone with all his hertes life  
He caught her in his armes and kiste.  
Was never wight that sigh ne wiste

A man that more joie made,  
Wherof they weren alle glade,  
Which herde tellen of this chaunce.  
This king tho with his wife Constance,  
Whiche had a great part of his will,  
In Rome for a time still  
Abode and made him well at ese.  
But so yet couth he never plesse  
His wife, that she him wolde saine  
Of her estate the trouthe pleine,  
Of what contre that she was bore,  
Ne what she was, and yet therfore  
With all his wit he hath done seke.  
Thus as they ligh in bedde and speke,  
She praith him and counseileth both,  
That for the worship of hem both  
So that her thought it were honeste  
He wolde an honourable feste  
Make er he went in that citee,  
Where themperour him self shall be.  
He graunteth all that she him praide.  
But as men in that time saide,  
This emperour fro thilke day  
That first his doughter went away  
He was than after never gladde,  
But what that any man him badde  
Of grace for his doughter sake  
That grace wolde he nought forsake,  
And thus ful great almesse he dede,  
Wherof he hadde many a bede.



This emperour out of the towne,  
 Within a ten mile enviroune,  
 Where as it thought him for the beste  
 Hath fondry places for to reste,  
 And as fortune wolde tho  
 He was dwellend at one of tho.  
 The kinge Allee forth with thassent  
 Of Custe his wife hath thider sent  
 Morice his sone, as he was taught,  
 To themperour, and he goth straught  
 And in his fader halve he fought  
 As he, whiche his lordship fought,  
 That of his highe worthinesse  
 He wolde do so great mekenesse  
 His owne town to come and se  
 And yive a time in the citee,  
 So that his fader might him gete,  
 That he wolde ones with him ete.  
 This lorde hath graunted his requeste.  
 And whan the day was of the feste,  
 In worship of her emperour  
 The kinge and eke the senatour  
 Forth with her wives bothe two,  
 With many a lorde and lady mo,  
 On hors riden him ayeine,  
 Till it befell upon a pleine  
 They figh, where he was comend.  
 With that Constance anone praiend  
 Spake to her lord, that he abide,  
 So that I may to-fore ride

Qualiter Constancia,  
 que antea per totum  
 tempus exilii sui pe-  
 nes omnes incognitam  
 se celavit, tunc de-  
 mum patri suo impe-  
 ratori se ipsam per  
 omnia manifestavit,  
 quod cum rex Allee  
 scivisset, una cum uni-  
 versa Romanorum  
 multitudine inestima-  
 bili gaudio admiran-  
 tes cunctipotentem  
 laudarunt.

To ben upon his bienvenue  
 The firste, which shall him salue.  
 And thus after her lordes graunte  
 Upon a mule white amblaunte  
 Forth with a fewe rode this quene.  
 They wondred, what she wolde mene,  
 And riden after softe pas.  
 But whan this lady comen was  
 To themperour, in his presence  
 She faide aloude in audience:  
 My lord, my fader, wel you be!  
 And of this time that I se  
 Your honour and your gode hele,  
 Whiche is the helpe of my quarele,  
 I thonke unto the goddes might.  
 For joie his herte was aflight  
 Of that she tolde in remembraunce.  
 And whan he wiste, it was Constance,  
 Was never fader half so blithe.  
 Wepend he kiste her often sithe,  
 So was his hert all overcome,  
 For though his moder were come  
 Fro deth to life out of the grave,  
 He might no more wonder have  
 Than he hath, whan that he her figh.  
 With that her owne lord come nigh  
 And is to themperour obeied.  
 And whan the fortune is bewreied,  
 How that Constance is come aboute,  
 So harde an herte was none oute,

That he for pite tho ne wepte.  
Arcennus, which her fonde and kepte,  
Was thanne glad of that is falle,  
So that with joie among hem alle  
They riden in at Rome gate.  
This emperour thought all to late,  
Till that the pope were come  
And of the lordes fende some  
To pray him, that he wolde hafte.  
And he cam forth in alle hafte.  
And whan that he this tale herde,  
How wonderly this chaunce ferde,  
He thonketh god of his miracle,  
To whos might may be none obstacle.  
The king a noble feste hem made,  
And thus they weren alle glad.  
A parlement er that they went  
They fetten unto this entent,  
To putten Rome in full espeire,  
That Morice was apparant heire  
And shulde abide with hem stille,  
For such was all the londes wille.

Whan every thing was fully spoke  
Of forwe and queint was all the smoke,  
Tho toke his leve Allee the kinge  
And with full many a riche thinge  
Which themperour him hadde yive  
He goth a gladde life to live.  
For he Constance hath in his honde,  
Which was the comfort of the londe.

*Qualiter Mauricius  
cum imperatore ut  
heres imperii re-  
manfit et rex Allee  
et Constancia in  
Angliam regressi  
sunt.*



For whan that he cam home ayein,  
 There is no tunge that might sain,  
 What joie was that ilke stounde  
 Of that he hath his quene founde,  
 Which first was sent of goddes sonde,  
 Whan she was driven upon the stronde,  
 By whom the misbeleve of sinne  
 Was leste and Cristes feith came inne  
 To hem that whilome were blinde.  
 But he, which hindreth every kinde

Qualiter rex Allee  
 post biennium in  
 Anglia humane  
 carnis resolucio-  
 nem subiens nature  
 debitum persoluit,  
 post cuius obitum  
 Constancia cum  
 patre suo Rome se  
 transtulit moratu-  
 ram.

And for no gold may be forbought,  
 The deth comend er he besought  
 Toke with this king such acqueintaunce,  
 That he with all his retenaunce  
 Ne mighte nought defend his life,  
 And thus he parteth from his wife,  
 Which thanne made sorwe inough.  
 And therupon her herte drough  
 To leven Englund for ever  
 And go where that she hadde lever  
 To Rome whanne that she came.  
 And thus of all the lond she nam  
 Her leve, and goth to Rome ayein.  
 And after that the bokes sain  
 She was nought there but a throwe,  
 Whan deth of kinde hath overthrowe  
 Her worthy fader, which men saide  
 That he betwene her armes deide.  
 And afterward the yere suende  
 Tho god hath made of her an ende,

De morte impera-  
 toris.

De morte Con-  
 stancie.

And fro this worldes fairie  
Hath take her into compaignie.

Morice her sone was corowned,  
Which so ferforth was abandouned  
To Cristes feith, that men him calle  
Morice the christenest of alle.

And thus the whel meving of love  
Was ate laste set above.

And so, as thou hast herd to-fore,  
The false tunges weren lore,  
Whiche upon love wolden lie.

Forthy touchend of this envie,  
Which longeth unto bakbitinge,  
Be ware thou make no lesinge  
In hindring of another wight.

And if thou wolt be taught aright,  
What mischefe bakbitinge doth,  
By other waie a tale soth  
Now might thou here next suende,  
Which to this vice is accordende.

In a cronique as thou shalt wite  
A great ensample I finde write,  
Whiche I shall telle upon this thinge.  
Philip of Macedoine kinge  
Two sones hadde by his wife,  
Whose fame yet in Grece is rife.  
Demetrius the firste brother  
Was hote and Perseus that other.  
Demetrius men saiden tho  
The better knight was of the two,

De coronacione  
Mauricii, qui ad-  
huc in cronicis  
Mauricius impera-  
tor christianissimus  
nuncupatur.

Hic ponit confessor  
exemplum contra is-  
tos detractores, qui in  
alterius vituperium  
mendacia confingen-  
tes diffamacionem fi-  
eri procurant. Et nar-  
rat, qualiter Perseus,  
Philippi regis Mace-  
donie filius, Demetrio  
fratri suo ob eius pro-  
bitatem invidens,  
composito detractio-  
nis mendacio ipsum  
apud patrem suum  
mortaliter accusavit,  
dicens, ipse non solum  
patrem, sed et totum



Macedonie regnum  
 Romanis hostibus  
 proditorie vendidit  
 let, quem super hoc in  
 iudicium producit  
 testibusque iudicibus  
 auro subornatis,  
 quamvis falsissime  
 morte condemnatum  
 eiecit, quo defuncto  
 etiam et pater  
 infra breve postea  
 mortuus est. Et sic  
 Perseo successive regnante  
 deus huiusmodi detractionis  
 invidiam abhorrens ipsum cum  
 universa suorum pugnantium  
 multitudo extra Danubii fluvium  
 ab Emilio tunc Romanorum  
 consule eventu bellico interfici  
 fortunavit. Ita quod ab illo die  
 Macedonie potestas penitus  
 destructa Romano imperio  
 subjugata deservivit, et eius  
 detraçtio, quam contra alium  
 conspiraverat, in sui ipsius  
 diffamacionem pro perpetuo  
 divulgata constitit.

To whom the lond was attendant  
 As he, whiche heir was apparant  
 To regne after his faders day.  
 But that thing, which no water may  
 Quenche in this world but ever brenneth,  
 Into his brothers hert it renneth,  
 The proud envie of that he fighe  
 His brother shulde climbe on highe,  
 And he to him mot than obeie  
 That may he suffre by no waie,  
 With strengthe durst he no thing fonde.  
 So toke he lesinge upon honde,  
 Whan he figh time and spake therto.  
 For it befell that time so  
 His fader grete werres hadde  
 With Rome, whiche he streite ladde  
 Through mighty hond of his manhod,  
 As he which hath inough knighthod.  
 And ofte hem hadde sore greved.  
 But er the werre were acheved,  
 As he was upon ordenaunce  
 At home in Grece, it fell par chaunce  
 Demetrius, whiche ofte aboute  
 Ridend was, stood that time out,  
 So that this Perse in his absence,  
 Which bar the tunge of pestilence  
 With false wordes whiche he feigneth  
 Upon his owne brother pleineth,  
 In privete behinde his bake  
 And to his fader thus he spake :



My dere fader, I am holde  
By way of kinde, as refon wolde  
That I fro you fhall nothing hide,  
Which mighte torne in any fide  
Of youre eftate into grevaunce.  
Forthy min hertes obeifaunce  
Toward you I thenke kepe.  
For it is good ye take kepe  
Upon a thing, whiche is me tolde.  
My brother hath us alle folde  
To hem of Rome, and you alfo,  
For thanne they behote him fo,  
That he with hem fhall regne in pees.  
Thus hath he caft for his encres,  
That your eftate fhall go to nought.  
And this to prove fhall be brought  
So ferforth, that I undertake  
It fhall nought wel mow be forfake.

The kinge upon this tale anfwerd  
And faid, if this thing which he herd  
Be foth and may be brought to prove,  
It fhall nought be to his behove,  
Which fo has shapen us the werfte,  
For he him felf fhall be the ferfte  
That fhall be dede, if that I may.  
Thus afterwarde upon a day,  
Whan that Demetrius was come,  
Anone his fader hath him nome  
And bad unto his brother Perfe,  
That he his tale fhall reherfe

Of thilke trefon, whiche he tolde.  
 And he whiche all untrouthe wolde  
 Counseileth, that so high a nede  
 Be treted, where as it may spede,  
 In comun place of jugement.  
 The king therto yaf his assent.

Demetrius was put in holde,  
 Wherof that Perseus was bolde.  
 Thus stood the trouthe under the charge  
 And the falschede goth at large,  
 Which through behest hath overcome  
 The greatest of the lordes some,  
 That priveliche of his accorde  
 They stonde as witnesse of recorde,  
 The juge was made favourable,  
 Thus was the lawe deceivable,  
 So ferforth that the trouthe fonde  
 Rescouffe none, and thus the londe  
 Forth with the king deceived were.  
 The gilteles was dampned there  
 And deide upon accusement.  
 But suche a fals conspirement,  
 Though it be prive for a throwe,  
 God wolde nought it were unknowe,  
 And that was afterward wel proved  
 In him, which hath the deth controved,  
 Of that his brother was so flaine.  
 This Perseus was wonder faine  
 As he, that tho was apparant  
 Upon the regne expectant,

Wherof he wax fo proude and veine,  
That he his fader in difdeigne  
Hath take and sette at none accompte,  
As he, which thought him to furmounte,  
That where he was firft debonaire  
He was tho rebell and contraire,  
And nought as heir, but as a kinge  
He toke upon him alle thinge  
Of malice and of tirannie  
In contempte of regalie  
Livend his fader and fo wrought,  
That whan the fader him bethought  
And fighe to whether fide it drough,  
Anone he wifte well inough,  
How Perſe after his falſe tonge  
Hath fo thenvious belle ronge,  
That he hath ſlain his owne brother,  
Wherof as thanne he knew none other.  
But ſodeinly the juge he nome,  
Which corrupt ſat upon the dome,  
In ſuche a wiſe and hath him preſſed,  
That he the ſoth him hath confeſſed  
Of all that hath ben ſpoke and do.  
More ſory than the king was tho  
Was never man upon this molde  
And thought in certain, that he wolde  
Vengeaunce take upon this wronge.  
But thother partie was fo ſtronge,  
That for the lawe of no ſtatute  
There may no right ben execute.



And upon this diuision  
 The lond was torned up so downe,  
 Wherof his herte is so distraught,  
 That he for pure sorwe hath caught  
 The maladie, of which nature  
 Is queint in every creature.

And whan this king was passed thus,  
 This false tungen Perseus  
 The regiment hath underfonge.  
 But there may nothing stonde longe,  
 Whiche is nought upon trouthe grounded.  
 For god, which hath al thinge bounded  
 And sigh the falsched of his guile,  
 Hath set him but a litel while,  
 That he shall regne upon depose,  
 For sodeinlich right as a rose  
 So sodeinliche down he felle.

In thilke time so it befelle  
 This newe king of newe pride  
 With strengthe shope him for to ride  
 And saide he wolde Rome waste,  
 Wherof he made a besy haste,  
 And hath assembled him an host  
 In all that ever he might most,  
 What man that might wepen bere  
 Of all he wolde none forbere.  
 So that it mighte nought be nombred  
 The folke which was after encombred  
 Through him, that god wolde overthrow.  
 Anon it was at Rome know

The pompe, which that Perse lad,  
And the Romans that time had  
A consul, which was cleped thus  
By name Paul Emilius,  
A noble, a worthy knight withalle,  
And he, which chef was of hem alle  
This werre on honde hath undertake.  
And whan he shulde his leve take  
Of a yong doughter, which was his,  
She wepte, and he what cause it is  
Her axeth, and she him answerde,  
That Perse is dede, and he it herde  
And wondreth what she mene wolde.  
And she upon childehod him tolde,  
That Perse her litel hounde is dede.  
With that he pulleth up his hede  
And made right a glad visage  
And said, how it was a presage  
Touchend unto that other Perse,  
Of that fortune him shulde adverse.  
He saith for suche a prenostike  
Most of an hound was to him like,  
For as it is an houndes kinde  
To berke upon a man behinde,  
Right so behinde his brothers bake  
With false wordes whiche he spake  
He hath do flaine, and that is routh.  
But he, whiche hateth all untrouth  
The highe god it shall redresse.  
For so my doughter prophetesse

Forth with her litel houndes dethe  
 Betokeneth, and thus forth he geth  
 Comforted of this evidence  
 With the Romans in his defence  
 Ayein the Grekes that ben comende.  
 This Perseus as nought seende  
 This mischef which that him abode  
 With all his multitude rode  
 And prided him upon this thinge,  
 Of that he was become a kinge,  
 And howe he had his regne gete.  
 But he hath all the right foryete,  
 Which longeth unto governaunce,  
 Wherof through goddes ordenaunce  
 It felle upon the winter tide,  
 That with his hoste he shulde ride  
 Over Danubie thilke flood,  
 Whiche all befroze thanne stood  
 So harde, that he wende wele  
 To passe. But the blinde whele,  
 Which torneth ofte er men be ware,  
 Thilke ice, which that the horsmen bare,  
 To-brake, so that a great partie  
 Was dreint of the chivalrie,  
 The rerewarde it toke aweie,  
 Came none of hem to londe drey.

Paulus this worthy knight Romain  
 By his asprie it herde sain,  
 And hasteth him all that he may,  
 So that upon that other day



He came, where he this host behelde,  
And that was in a large felde,  
Where the banners ben displaied.  
He hath anone his men arraied,  
And whan that he was embatailed  
He goth and hath the felde assailed  
And slough and toke all that he fonde,  
Wherof the Macedoine londe,  
Which through king Alifaundre honoured  
Long time stood, tho was devoured  
To Perse and all that infortune  
They wite, so that the comune  
Of all the londe his heire exile,  
And he dispeired for the while  
Desguised in a pouer wede  
To Rome goth, and there for nede  
The craft, which thilke time was,  
To worche in laton and in bras  
He lerneth for his sustenaunce.  
Such was the sones purveiaunce.  
And of his fader it is faide,  
In strong prison that he was laide  
In Albe, where that he was dede  
For hunger and defaulte of brede.  
The hounde was token and prophecie,  
That liche an hounde he shulde deie,  
Which lich was of condition,  
Whan he with his detraction  
Barke on his brother so behinde  
Lo, what profit a man may finde,

Confessor.

Which hinder woll an other wight.  
 Forthy with all thin hole might,  
 My sone, escheue thilke vice.

Amans.

My fader, elles were I nice.  
 For ye therfore so well have spoke,  
 That it is in min herte loke  
 And ever shall, but of envie,  
 If there be more in his bailie  
 Towardes love, say me what.

Confessor.

My sone, as guile under the hat  
 With sleightes of a tregetour  
 Is hid, envie of such colour  
 Hath yet the fourthe deceivaunt,  
 The whiche is cleped fals semblaunt,  
 Wherof the mater and the forme  
 Nowe herken, and I the shall enforme.

4. *Nil bilinguis aget, nisi duplo concinat ore,  
 Dumque diem loquitur nox sua vota tegit.  
 Vultus habet lucem, tenebras mens, sermo salutem,  
 Aëtus sed morbum dat suus esse gravem.  
 Pax tibi, quam spondet, magis est prenostica guerre,  
 Commoda si dederit, disce subesse dolum.  
 Quod patet esse fides, in eo fraus est que politi  
 Principium pacti finis habere negat.  
 O quem condicio talis deformat amantem,  
 Qui magis apparens est in amore nihil.*

He tractat confessor super quarta specie invidie, que dissimulacio dicitur, cuius vultus quanto maioris amicie apparentiam ostendit, tanto subtilioris doli fallacias ad decipi-

Of fals semblaunt if I shall telle  
 Above all other it is the welle,  
 Out of the which deceipte floweth.  
 There is no man so wise, that knoweth  
 Of thilke flood, whiche is the tide,  
 Ne howe he shulde him selven guide

To take fauf paffage there.  
And yet the wind to mannes ere  
Is fofte, and as it femeth oute  
It maketh clere weder all aboute.  
But though it feme, it is nought fo.  
For fals femblaunt hath ever mo  
Of his counfeil in compaignie  
The derke untrewe ypocrisie,  
Whofe word discordeth to his thought.  
Forthy they ben to-gider brought  
Of one covine, of one houfholde,  
As it fhall after this be tolde.  
Of fals femblaunt it nedeth nought  
To telle of olde enfamples ought.  
For all day in experience  
A man may fee thilke evidence  
Of faire wordes, whiche he hereth.  
But yet the barge envie ftereth  
And halt it ever fro the londe,  
Where fals femblaunt with ore in honde  
It roweth and will nought arrive,  
But let it on the wawes drive  
In great tempeft and great debate,  
Wherof that love and his eftate  
Empeireth. And therfore I rede,  
My fone, that thou fle and drede  
This vice, and what that other fain  
Let thy femblaunt be trewe and plein.  
For fals femblaunt is thilke vice,  
Which never was without office,

endum mens yma-  
ginatur.



Where that envie thenketh to guile  
 He shall be for that ilke while  
 Of prive counseil messagere.  
 For whan his semblaunt is most clere  
 Than is he most derke in his thought,  
 Though men him se they knowe him nought.  
 But as it sheweth in the glas  
 Thing which therinne never was,  
 So sheweth it in his visage  
 That never was in his corage.  
 Thus doth he all his thing by sleighte.  
 Now lith thy conscience in weighte,  
 My gode sone, and thrive the here  
 If thou were ever custumere  
 To fals semblaunt in any wise.

*Confessio amantis.* For ought I can me yet avise,  
 My gode fader, certes no,  
 If I for love have ought don so,  
 Now axeth, I wolde pray you.  
 For elles I wot never how  
 Of fals semblaunt that I have gilt.

*Confessor.* My sone, and sithen that thou wilt,  
 That I shall axe, gabbe nought,  
 But telle, if ever was thy thought  
 With fals semblaunt and coverture  
 To wite of any creature,  
 How that he was with love ladde,  
 So were he sory, were he gladde.  
 Whan than thou wifest howe it were  
 All that he rouned in thin ere,

Thou toldest forth in other place  
To fetten him fro loves grace,  
Of what woman that the best liste.  
There as no man his counseil wiste  
But thou, by whom he was deceived  
Of love and from his purpose weived,  
And thoughtest that his disturbaunce  
Thin owne cause shuld avaunce,  
As who faith, I am so fely,  
There may no mannes privete  
Ben heled half so well as min.  
Art thou, my sone, of fuche engin?  
Tell on. My gode fader, nay,  
As for the more part I saie.  
But of somedele I am beknowe,  
That I may stonde in thilke rowe  
Amonges hem, that saundres use.  
I woll nought me therof excuse,  
That I with such colour ne steine,  
Whan I my beste semblant feigne  
To my felow, till that I wote  
All his counseil both colde and hote.  
For by that cause I make him chere,  
Till I his love knowe and here.  
And if so be min herte foucheth,  
That ought unto my lady toucheth  
Of love, that he woll me telle,  
Anon I renne unto the welle  
And caste water in the fire,  
So that his cart amid the mire

Amans.

By that I have his counseil knowe  
Full ofte sith I overthrowe,  
Whan that he weneth best to stonde.  
But this I do you understonde,  
If that a man love elles where,  
So that my lady be nought there,  
And he me tell, I will it hide,  
There shall no worde escape aside.  
For with deceit of no semblaunt  
To him breke I no covenaut.  
Me liketh nought in other place  
To lette no man of his grace  
Ne for to ben inquisitive  
To knowe an other mannes life,  
Where that he love or love nought,  
That toucheth nothing to my thought.  
But all it passeth through min ere  
Right as a thing that never were  
And is foryete and laid beside.  
But if it toucheth any side  
My lady, as I have er spoken,  
Min eres ben thanne nought loken.  
For certes whanne that betit,  
My will, min herte and all my wit  
Ben fully set to herken and spire,  
What any man woll speke of hire.  
Thus have I feigned compaignie  
Full ofte, for I wolde aspie  
What thinge it is, that any man  
Tell of my worthy lady can.



And for two causes I do this.  
The firste cause wherof is,  
If that I might of herken and seke  
That any man of her missepeke,  
I wold excuse her so fully,  
That whan she wist it inderly,  
Min hope shulde be the more  
To have her thank for evermore.  
That other cause, I you assure,  
Is, why that I by coverture  
Have feigned semblaunt ofte time  
To hem that passen all day byme  
And ben lovers als well as I.  
For this I wene truely,  
That there is of hem alle none,  
That they ne loven everychone  
My lady. For sothlich I leve  
And durste setten it in preve,  
Is none so wise that shulde asterte,  
But he were lustles in his herte,  
For why and he my lady sigh,  
Her visage and her goodlich eye,  
But he her loved, er he went.  
And for that suche is min entent,  
That is the cause of min aspie,  
Why that I feigne compaignie  
And make felowe over all.  
For gladly wolde I knowen all  
And holde me covert alway,  
That I full ofte ye or nay

Ne list answere in any wise,  
 But feignen semblaunt as the wise  
 And herken tales, till I knowe  
 My ladies lovers all arowe.  
 And whan I here, how they have wrought,  
 I fare as though I herd it nought  
 And as I no worde understood.  
 But that is nothing for her good.  
 For levethe well, the soth is this,  
 That whan I knowe all how it is,  
 I woll but furthren hem a lite,  
 But all the werste I can endite  
 I tell it unto my lady plat  
 For furthering of min own estate  
 And hinder hem all that ever I may.  
 But for all that yet dare I say,  
 I finde unto my self no bote,  
 All though min herte nedes mote  
 Through strength of love al that I here  
 Discover unto my lady dere.  
 For in good feith I have no might  
 To hele fro that fwete wight,  
 If that it toucheth her any thinge.  
 But this wote wel the heven kinge,  
 That fithen first the world began  
 Unto none other straunge man  
 Ne feigned I semblaunt ne chere  
 To wite or axe of his matere,  
 Though that he loved ten or twelve,  
 Whan it was nought my ladies selve.

But if he wold axe any rede  
Alonlich of his owne hede,  
How he with other love ferde,  
His tales with min eres I herde,  
But to min herte came it nought  
Ne fank no deper in my thought  
But held counseil, as I was bede,  
And tolde it never in other stede,  
But let it passen as it come.  
Now fader, say, what is thy dome,  
And how thou wolt, that I be peined  
For such semblaunt as I have feigned.

Confessor.

My sone, if reson woll be peised,  
There may no vertue ben unpreised  
Ne vice none be set in prise.  
Forthy, my sone, if thou be wise  
Do no viser upon thy face,  
Which wolde nought thin hert embrace.  
For if thou do, within a throwe  
To other men it shall be knowe,  
So might thou lightly fall in blame  
And lese a great part of thy name.  
And netheles in this degre  
Full ofte time thou might se  
Of suche men, as now a day  
This vice setten in assay,  
I speke it for no mannes blame  
But for to warne the the same.  
My sone, as I may here talke  
In every place where I walke,



I not, if it be so or none,  
But it is many daies gone,  
That I first herde telle this,  
How fals semblaunt hath be and is  
Most comunly from yere to yere  
With hem that dwelle among us here,  
Of suche as we Lumbardes calle.  
For they ben the fliest of alle  
So as men sain in towne about  
To feigne and sheue thing without,  
Whiche is revers to that withinne,  
Wherof that they full ofte winne,  
Whan they by reson shulde lese.  
They ben the last and yet they chese,  
And we the firste and yet behinde  
We gone, there as we shulden finde  
The profit of our owne londe,  
Thus gone they free withouten bonde  
To done her profit all at large,  
And other men bere all the charge,  
Of Lumbardes unto this covine,  
Whiche alle londes conne engine,  
May fals semblaunt in especiall  
Be likened, for they over all,  
Where that they thenken for to dwelle,  
Among hem self, so as they telle,  
First ben enformed for to lere  
A craft, which cleped is facrere.  
For if facrere come about,  
Than afterward hem stant no doubt

To voide with a subtil honde  
 The beste goodes of the londe  
 And bringe chaffe and take corne,  
 Where as facrere goth beforne  
 In all his waie he fint no lette,  
 That dore can none ussher shette,  
 In whiche he list to take entre.  
 And thus the counseil most secre  
 Of every thing facrere knoweth,  
 Whiche into straunge place he bloweth,  
 Where as he wote it may most greve.  
 And thus facrere maketh beleve,  
 So that full ofte he hath deceived,  
 Er that he may ben apperceived.  
 Thus is this vice for to drede,  
 For who these olde bokes rede  
 Of suche ensamples as were er,  
 Him oughte be the more ware  
 Of alle tho that feigne chere,  
 Wherof thou shalte a tale here.

Of fals semblant, whiche is beleved,  
 Ful many a worthy wight is greved,  
 And was long time or we were bore.  
 To the, my sone, I will therfore  
 A tale tell of fals semblaunt,  
 Which falseth many a covenaut  
 And many a fraude of fals counseil  
 There ben hangend upon his sail.  
 And that abouten gilteles  
 Both Deianire and Hercules,

Hic ponit confessor  
 exemplum contra istos,  
 qui sub dissimulate  
 benivolencie speculo  
 alios in amore defraudant,  
 et narrat, qualiter Hercules,  
 cum ipse quoddam fluvium  
 cuius vada non novit cum  
 Deianira transmeare proposuit,  
 superveniens Nessus gygas ob  
 amicitiam Herculis, ut dixit,  
 Deianiram in ulnas suas  
 suscipiens transripam salvo  
 perduxit. Et statim cum

ad litus pervenisset,  
quam cito currere po-  
tuit, ipsam tanquam  
propriam in prejudi-  
cium Herculis aspor-  
tare fugiens conaba-  
tur. Per quod non  
solum ipsi sed etiam  
Herculi mortis even-  
tum fortuna postmo-  
dum causavit.

The whiche in great disese fell  
Through fals semblaunt, as I shall tell.

Whan Hercules within a throwe  
All only hath his herte throwe  
Upon this faire Deianire,  
It fell him on a day desire,  
Upon a river as he stood  
That passe he wolde over the flood  
Withoute bote and with him lede  
His love, but he was in drede  
For tendresse of that swete wight,  
For he knewe nought the forde aright.  
There was a geaunt thanne nigh,  
Which Nessus hight, and whan he sigh  
This Hercules and Deianire,  
Within his herte he gan conspire  
As he, which through his trecherie  
Hath Hercules in great envie,  
Whiche he bare in his herte loke,  
And than he thought it shall be wroke.  
But he ne durste netheles  
Ayein this worthie Hercules  
Fall in debate as for to feight,  
But feigned semblaunt all by sleight  
Of frendship and of alle good,  
And cometh, where as they both stood,  
And maketh hem all the chere he can  
And saith, that as her owne man  
He is all redy for to do  
What thinge he may, and it fel so,



That they upon this semblaunt triste  
And axen him, if that he wiste  
What thinge hem were best to done,  
So that they mighten sauþ and sone  
The water passe, he and she.  
And whan Nessus the priuete  
Knew of her herte what it ment  
As he, that was of double entent,  
He made hem right a glad visage.  
And whan he herde of the passage  
Of him and her, he thoughte guile  
And feigneth semblant for a while  
To done hem plesaunce and seruise,  
But he thought all an other wise.

This Nessus with his wordes sligh  
Yaf such counseil to-fore her eye,  
Which semeth outward profitable  
And was withinne deceivable.  
He bad hem of the streames depe  
That they beware and take kepe,  
So as they knowe nought the pas.  
But for to helpe in suche a cas  
He saith him self, that for her ese  
He wolde, if that it mighte hem plesse,  
The passage of the water take  
And for this lady undertake  
To bere her to that other stronde  
And sauþ to set her up a londe,  
And Hercules may than also  
The waie knowe, how he shall go.

And herto they accorden all.  
But what as after shall befall  
Well paid was Hercules of this.  
And this geaunt also glad is  
And toke this lady up alofte  
And set her on his shulder softe  
And in the flood began to wade  
As he, which no grucching made,  
And bare her over sauf and sounde.  
But whan he stood on drie grounde  
And Hercules was fer behinde,  
He set his trouth all out of minde,  
Who so therof be lese or loth  
With Deianire forth he goth,  
As he that thoughte to dissever  
The compaignie of hem for ever.  
Whan Hercules therof toke hede,  
As faste as ever he might him spede  
He hieth after in a throwe.  
And hapneth that he had a bowe,  
The whiche in alle hast he bende,  
As he that wolde an arwe sende,  
Whiche he to-fore had envenimed.  
He hath so well his shotte timed,  
That he him through the body smette  
And thus the false wight he lette.  
But list now, suche a felonie.  
Whan Nessus wist he shulde deie,  
He toke to Deianire his sherte,  
Which with the blood was of his herte

Through out dissteigned over all,  
And tolde how she it kepe shall  
And prively to this entent,  
That if her lorde his herte went  
To love in any other place,  
This shert he saith hath suche a grace,  
That if she may so mochel make,  
That he the sherte upon him take,  
He shall all other lette in veine  
And torne unto her love ayeine.

Who was so glad but Deianire?  
Her thought her herte was on a fire,  
Till it was in her cofre loke,  
So that no word therof was spoke.

The daies gone, the yeres passe,  
The hertes waxen lasse and lasse  
Of hem, that ben to love untrewed.  
This Hercules with herte newe  
His love hath set on Eolen,  
And therof speken alle men.  
This Eolen, this faire maide  
Was as men thilke time saide  
The kinges doughter of Eurice.  
And she made Hercules so nice  
Upon her love and so affote,  
That he him clotheth in her cote,  
And she in his was clothed ofte.  
And thus febleffe is set alofte,  
And strengthe was put under fote.  
There can no man therof do bote.



Whan Deianire hath herd this speche,  
 There was no forwe for to seche,  
 Of other helpe wot she none,  
 But goth unto her cofre anone,  
 With wepend eye and wofull herte  
 She toke out thilke unhappy sherte,  
 As she that wende wel to do,  
 And brought her werke aboute so,  
 That Hercules this shert on dede  
 To suche entent, and as she was bede  
 Of Nessus, so as I said er.  
 But therof was she nought the ner,  
 As no fortune may be weived,  
 With fals semblant she was deceived.  
 But whan she wende best have wonne,  
 She lost all that she hath begonne.  
 For thilke shert unto the bone  
 His body sette a fire anone  
 And cleveth so, it may nought twinne  
 For the venim, that was therinne.  
 And he than as a wilde man  
 Unto the highe wode he ran,  
 And as the clerke Ovide telleth,  
 The grete trees to grounde he felleth  
 With strengthe of his owne might  
 And made an hughe fire upright  
 And lept therin him self at ones  
 And brent him self both flesh and bones,  
 Which thinge cam through fals semblant,  
 That false Nessus the geaunt

Made unto him and to his wife,  
Wherof that he hath lost his life,  
And she sory for evermo.

Forthy my sone, er the be wo  
I rede, be wel ware therfore.  
For whan so great a man was lore,  
It ought to yive a great concept  
To warne all other of such deceipt.

Confessor.

Graunt mercy, fader, I am ware  
So fer, that I no more dare  
Of fals semblaunt take acqueintaunce.  
But rather I wol do penaunce,  
That I have feigned chere er this.  
Now axeth forth, what so there is  
Of that belongeth to my shrifte.  
My sone, yet there is the fiste,  
Whiche is conceived of envie  
And cleped is supplantarie,  
Through whos campassement and guile  
Ful many a man hath lost his while  
In love as wel as other wise  
Here after as I shall devise.

Amans.

Confessor.

*Invidus alterius est supplantator honoris  
Et tua quo vertat culmina subtus arat.  
Est opus occultum, quasi que latet anguis in herba  
Quod facit, et subita sorte nocivus adest.  
Sic subtilis amans alium supplantat amantem  
Et capit occulte, quod nequit ipse palam,  
Sepeque supplantans in plantam plantat amoris,  
Quod putat in propriis alter habere bonis.*

5.

The vice of supplantacion  
With many a fals collacion,

Hic tractat confessor de quinta specie invidie, que sup-

plantacio dicitur,  
cuius cultor prius-  
quam percipiatur  
aliene dignitatis et  
officii multociens  
intrusor existit.

Whiche he conspireth all unknowe,  
Full ofte time hath overthrowe  
The worship of another man.  
So wel no life awaite can  
Ayein his sleighte for to caste,  
That he his purpose ate laste  
Ne hath, er that it be withset.  
But most of all his hert is set  
In court upon these great offices  
Of dignites and benifices.  
Thus goth he with his sleighte about  
To hinder and shove another out  
And stonden with his slich compas  
In stede there another was,  
And so to set him selven inne.  
He recheth nought be so he winne  
Of that another man shall lese,  
And thus full ofte chalk for chese  
He chaungeth with full litel coste,  
Wherof another hath the losse  
And he the profit shall receive.  
For his fortune is to deceive  
And for to chaunge upon the whele  
His wo with other mennes wele,  
Of that another man availeth  
His own estate thus he up haileth  
And taketh the brid to his beyete,  
Where other men the bushes bete.  
My sone, and in the same wise  
There ben lovers of suche emprise,



That shapen hem to be relieved,  
 Where it is wronge to ben acheved.  
 For it is other mannes right  
 Whiche he hath taken day and night  
 To kepe for his owne store  
 Toward him self for evermore  
 And is his proper by the lawe,  
 Which thing that axeth no felawe,  
 If love holde his covenant.  
 But they that worchen by supplant,  
 Yet wolden they a man supplant  
 And take a part of thilke plant,  
 Whiche he hath for him selve set.  
 And so ful ofte is all unknet,  
 That some man weneth be right faste.  
 For supplaunt with his flie caste  
 Full ofte happeneth for to mowe  
 Thing, which another man hath sowe,  
 And maketh comun of proprete  
 With sleighte and with subtilte,  
 As men may sen from yere to yere.  
 Thus claimeth he the bote to stere,  
 Of whiche another maister is.

Forthy my sone, if thou er this  
 Haft ben of such profession,  
 Discover thy confession,  
 Haft thou supplanted any man?

For ought that I you telle can,  
 Min holy fader, as of dede  
 I am withouten any drede

Hic in amoris causa  
 opponit confessor  
 amanti super eo-  
 dem.

Confessio amantis.

240 *CONFESSIO AMANTIS.*

And guiltles, but of my thought  
 My conscience excuse I nought.  
 For were it wronge or were it right,  
 Me lacketh no thinge but might,  
 That I ne wolde longe er this  
 Of other mannes love iwis  
 By wy of supplantation  
 Have made appropriation  
 And holde that I never bought,  
 Though it another man forthought.  
 And all this speke I but of one,  
 For whom I let all other gone.  
 But her I may nought overpasse,  
 That I ne mote alway compasse,  
 Me rougth nought by what queintise,  
 So that I might in any wise  
 Fro sache, that my lady serve,  
 Her herte make for to swerve  
 Withoute any part of love.  
 For by the goddes alle above  
 I wolde it mighte so befall,  
 That I alone shuld hem alle  
 Supplant and welde her at my wille.  
 And that thing may I nought fulfille,  
 But if I shulde strengthe make.  
 And that I dare nought undertake,  
 Though I were as was Alisaunder,  
 For therof might arise a sclaunder.  
 And certes that shall I do never,  
 For in good feith yet had I lever

In my simpleſſe for to deie,  
Than worche ſuch ſupplantarie.  
Of other wiſe I woll nought ſay,  
That if I founde a fiker way,  
I wolde as for concluſion  
Worche after ſupplantacion  
So highe a love for to winne.  
Now fader, if that this be finne,  
I am all redy to redreſſe  
The gilt, of whiche I me confeſſe.

My gode ſone, as of ſupplant  
The there nought drede tant ne quant,  
As for no thing that I have herde,  
But only that thou haſt miſferde  
Thenkend and that me liketh nought.  
For god beholt a mannes thought.  
And if thou underſtood in ſoth  
In loves cauſe what it doth  
A man to ben a ſupplantour,  
Thou woldeſt for thin own honour  
By double waie take kepe.

Confellor.

Fiſt for thin own eſtate to kepe  
To be thy ſelf ſo well bethought,  
That thou ſupplanted were nought.  
And eke for worſhip of thy name  
Towardes other do the ſame  
And ſuffre every man have his.  
But netheles it was and is,  
That in awaite at all aſſaies  
Supplant of love in our waies



The lief full ofte for the lever  
 Forsaketh, and so it hath done ever.  
 Ensamble I finde therupon,

*Qualiter Agamemnon de amore Brexeide Achillem, et Diomedes de amore Criseide Troilum supplantavit.*

At Troie how that Agamemnon  
 Supplanted the worthy knight  
 Achilles for that swete wight,  
 Which named was Brisseida,  
 And also of Criseida,  
 Whom Troilus to love ches,  
 Supplanted hath Diomedes,

*Qualiter Amphitrion socium suum Getam, qui Alcmenam peramavit, se ipsum loco alterius cautelosa supplantatione substituit.*

Of Geta and Amphitrione,  
 That whilom were both as one  
 Of frendship and of compaignie,  
 I rede how that supplantarie  
 In love, as it betid tho,  
 Beguiled hath one of hem two.  
 For this Geta, that I of mene,  
 To whom the lusty faire Alcmene  
 Assured was by way of love,  
 Whan he best wende have ben above  
 And sikereft of that he hadde,  
 Cupido so the cause ladde,  
 That while he was out of the way,  
 Amphitrion her love away  
 Hath take and in this forme he wrought.  
 By night unto the chambre he sought,  
 Where that she lay, and with a wile  
 He counterfeteth for the while  
 The vois of Get in suche a wise,  
 That made her of her bedde arise

Wenende, that it were he,  
 And lete him in, and whan they be  
 To-gider a bedde in armes faste,  
 This Geta cam than ate laste  
 Unto the dore and faide : undo.  
 And she answerd and badde him go  
 And faide, how that abed all warme  
 Her lief lay naked in her arme.  
 She wende, that it were soth.  
 Lo, what supplant of love doth.  
 This Geta forth bejaped went,  
 And yet ne wist he, what it ment.  
 Amphitrion him hath supplanted  
 With sleight of love and her enchanted,  
 And thus put every man out other.  
 The ship of love hath lost his rother,  
 So that he can no reson stere.  
 And for to speke of this matere  
 Touchende love and his supplaunt  
 A tale, whiche is accordaunt,  
 Unto thin ere I thenke enforme.  
 Now herken, for this is the forme.

Of thilke citee chefe of alle,  
 Which men the noble Rome calle,  
 Er it was set to Cristes feith,  
 There was, as the cronique faith,  
 An emperour, the whiche it ladde  
 In pees, that he no werres hadde.  
 There was no thing disobeisfaunt,  
 Which was to Rome appertenaunt,

Hic in amoris causa  
 contra fraudem de-  
 tractionis ponit con-  
 fessor exemplum et  
 narrat de quodam  
 Romani imperatoris  
 filio, qui probitates  
 armorum super omnia  
 exercere affectans  
 nesciente patre ultra  
 mare in partes Persie  
 ad deservendum sol-  
 dano super guerras  
 cum solo milite tan-



quam socio suo igno-  
tus se transtulit, et  
cum ipsius milicie fa-  
ma super alios ibidem  
celsius accrevisset, con-  
tingit, ut in quodam  
bello contra caliphum  
Egipti inito soldanus  
a sagitta mortaliter  
vulneratus priusquam  
moreretur quendam  
annulum filie sue se-  
cretissimum isto nobili  
Romano tradidit di-  
cens, qualiter filia sua  
sub paterne benedic-  
tionis vinculo adju-  
rata est, quod quicum-  
que dictum annulum  
ei afferret, ipsum in  
conjugem pre omni-  
bus susciperet. De-  
functo autem soldano  
versus civitatem, que  
Kaire dicitur, itine-  
rantes iste Romanus  
commilitoni suo hu-  
ius misterii secretum  
revelavit, qui noctan-  
ter a bursa domini sui  
annulum furto surri-  
piens hec, que audivit,  
usui proprio falsissima  
supplancione appli-  
cuit, et sic servus pro  
domino desponsata  
sibi soldani filia coro-  
natus Persie regna-  
vit.

But all was torned into rest.  
To some it thought hem for the best,  
To some it thought nothings so.  
And that was only unto tho,  
Whose herte stood upon knighthode.  
But most of alle his manhode  
The worthy sone of themperour,  
Which wolde ben a werriour,  
As he, that was chivalrous  
Of worldes fame and desirous,  
Began his fader to beseche,  
That he the werres mighte seche  
In straunge marches for to ride.  
His fader saide he shulde abide  
And wolde graunte him no leve.  
But he, which wolde nought beleve,  
A knight of his, to whom he trist,  
So that his fader nothing wist,  
He toke and tolde him his corage,  
That he purposeth a viage,  
If that fortune with him stonde.  
He said how that he wolde fonde  
The grete see to passe unknowe  
And there abide for a throwe  
Upon the werres to travaile.  
And to this point withoute faile  
This knight, whan he hath herde his lorde,  
Is swore and stant of his accorde.  
And they that bothe yonge were,  
So that in prive counseil there



They ben assented for to wende  
And therupon to make an ende  
Trefure inough with hem they token.  
And whan the time is best they loken  
That sodeinlich in a galeie  
Fro Rome-lond they went their waie  
And loded upon that other side.  
The worlde fell so thilke tide,  
Whiche ever his happes hath diverse,  
The grete souldan than of Perse  
Ayein the caliphe of Egipte  
A werre, which that him beclipte,  
Hath in a marche costeant.  
And he, which was a pursuaunt  
Worship of armes to atteigne,  
This Romain let anon ordeigne,  
That he was redy every dele.  
And whan he was arraied wele  
Of every thing, which him belongeth,  
Straught unto Kaire his wey he fongeth,  
Wher he the souldan thanne fonde  
And axeth, that within his londe  
He might him for the werre serve  
As he, which woll his thank deserve.  
The souldan was right glad withall  
And well the more in speciall,  
Whan that he wist he was Romain.  
But what was elles incertain  
That might he wite by no way.  
And thus the knight of whom I say

Toward the souldan is belefte  
And in the marches now and este,  
Where that the dedly werres were,  
He wroughte such knighthode there,  
That every man spake of him good.  
And thilke time so it stood,  
This mighty souldan by his wife  
A doughter hath, that in this life  
Men saide there was none so faire,  
She shulde ben her faders heire,  
And was of yeres ripe inough,  
Her beaute many an herte drough  
To bowen to that ilke lawe,  
Fro which no life may be withdrawe.  
And that is love, whose nature  
Set life and deth in a venture  
Of hem, that knighthode undertake.  
This lusty peine hath overtake  
The hert of this Romain so fore,  
That to knighthode more and more  
Prowesse avaunteth his corage.  
Lich to the leon in his rage,  
Fro whom that alle bestes fle,  
Such was this knight in his degre.  
Where he was armed in the felde,  
Ther durste none abide his shelde.  
Great price upon the werre he hadde.  
But she, whiche all the chaunce ladde,  
Fortune shope the marches so,  
That by thassent of bothe two

The souldan and the caliphe eke  
Bataile upon a day they feke,  
Which was in suche a wise set,  
That lenger shulde it nought be let.  
They made hem stronge on every side,  
And whan it drough toward the tide,  
That the bataile shulde be,  
The souldan in great privete  
A gold ringe of his doughter toke  
And made her swere upon a boke  
And eke upon the goddes all,  
That if fortune so befall  
In the bataile that he deie,  
That she shall thilke man obeie  
And take him to her husebonde,  
Which thilke same ring to honde  
Her shulde bringe after his deth.  
This hath she swore, and forth he geth  
With all the power of his londe  
Unto the marche, where he fonde  
His enemy full embatailed.  
The souldan hath the feld assailed.  
They that ben hardy sone assemblen,  
Wherof the dredfull hertes tremblen.  
That one fleeth, and that other sterveth,  
But aboven all his prise deserveth  
This knightly Romain, where he rode  
His dedly swerd no man abode,  
Ayein the which was no defence,  
Egipte fledde in his presence,



And they of Perse upon the chace  
Pursuen, but I not what grace  
Befell, an arwe out of a bowe  
All sodeinly within a throwe  
The souldan smote, and there he lay.  
The chas is left for thilke day,  
And he was bore into a tent.  
The souldan sigh how that it went,  
And that he shulde algate deie.  
And to this knight of Romainie,  
As unto him, whome he most triste,  
His doughters ring that none it wiste  
He toke and tolde him all the cas,  
Upon her othe what token it was,  
Of that she shulde ben his wife.  
Whan this was said, the hertes life  
Of this souldan departeth sone.  
And therupon, as was to done,  
The dede body well and faire,  
They carry till they come at Kaire,  
There he was worthely begrave.  
The lordes, whiche as wolden save  
The regne, which was desolate,  
To bringe it into good estate  
A parlement they set anone.  
Now herken what fell therupon.  
This yonge lord, this worthy knight  
Of Rome upon the same night,  
That they a morwe trete sholde,  
Unto his bacheler he tolde

His counfeil and the ring with al  
He fheweth, through which that he fhall,  
He faith, the kinges doughter wedde,  
For fo the ring was leid to wedde,  
He tolde, into her faders honde,  
That with what man that ſhe it fonde  
She ſhulde him take unto her lorde.  
And thus, he faith, ſtant of recorde.  
But no man wot who hath this ring.  
This bacheler upon this thing  
His ere and his entente laid  
And thoughte more than he ſaid  
And feigneth with a fals viſage,  
That he was glad, but his corage  
Was all ſet in another wife.  
Theſe olde philoſophres wiſe  
They writen upon thilke while,  
That he may beſt a man beguile  
In whom the man hath moſt credence.  
And this befell in evidence  
Toward this yonge lord of Rome.  
His bacheler, which hadde come,  
Whan that his lorde by night ſlepte,  
This ring, the which his maiſter kepte,  
Out of his purs away he dede  
And put another in the ſtede.  
A morwe whan the court is ſet  
The yonge lady was forth ſet,  
To whom the lordes done homage,  
And after that of mariage

They treten and axen of her wille.  
 But she, which thoughte to fulfille  
 Her faders heft in this matere,  
 Said openly, that men may here,  
 The charge whiche her fader bad.  
 Tho was this lorde of Rome glad  
 And drough toward his purs anone,  
 But all for nought, it was agone.  
 His bacheler it hath forth drawe  
 And axeth therupon the lawe,  
 That she him holde covenant.  
 The token was so suffisaunt,  
 That it ne mighte be forsake.  
 And netheles his lorde hath take  
 Quarele ayein his owne man,  
 But for no thing that ever he can  
 He might as thanne nought be herde,  
 So that his claime is unanwerde,  
 And he hath of his purpos failed.  
 This bacheler was tho counseiled  
 And wedded and of thilke empire  
 He was corowned lord and fire,  
 And all the lond him hath received,  
 Wherof his lord, which was deceived,  
 A fiknesse er the thridde morwe  
 Conceived hath of dedly sorwe.  
 And as he lay upon his deth,  
 There while him lasteth speche and breth  
 He sende for the worthiest  
 Of all the londe and eke the best



And tolde hem all the sothe tho,  
That he was sone and heire also  
Of themperour of grete Rome,  
And how that they to-gider come  
This knight and he, right as it was  
He tolde hem all the pleine cas.  
And for that he his counseil tolde,  
That other hath all that he wolde  
And he hath failed of his mede.  
As for the good he taketh none hede,  
He saith, but only of the love,  
Of which he wend have ben above.  
And therupon by letter write  
He doth his fader for to wite  
Of all the mater how it stode.  
And thanne with an hertely mode  
Unto the lordes he besought  
To tell his lady howe he bought  
Her love, of whiche another gladdeth.  
And with that worde his hewe fadeth  
And saide : a dieu my lady fwete.  
The life hath lost his kindely hete,  
And he lay dede as any stone,  
Wherof was fory many one,  
But none of alle so as she.  
This false knight in his degre  
Arested was and put in holde.  
For openly whan it was tolde  
Of the trefon, whiche is befalle,  
Throughout the lond they faiden alle,

If it be soth, that men suppose  
 His owne untrouth him shall depose.  
 And for to seche an evidence  
 With honour and great reverence,  
 Wherof they mighte knowe an ende,  
 To themperour anon they sende  
 The letter, whiche his sone wrote.  
 And whan that he the sothe wote,  
 To tell his sorwe is endeles,  
 But yet in haste nethes]  
 Upon the tale, whiche he herde,  
 His steward into Perse ferde  
 With many a worthy Romain eke  
 His lege tretour for to seke.  
 And whan they thider come were,  
 This knight him hath confessed there,  
 How falsly that he hath him bore,  
 Wherof his worthy lord was lore.  
 Tho saiden some he shulde deie,  
 But yet they founden such a weie,  
 That he shall nought be dede in Perse.  
 And thus the skilles ben diverse  
 By cause that he was coroned,  
 Of that the lond was abandoned  
 To him, all though it were unright.  
 There is no peine for him dight,  
 But to this point and to this ende  
 They graunten wel, that he shall wende  
 With the Romaines to Rome ayein.  
 And thus accorded full and plein

The quicke body with the dede  
 With leve take forth they lede,  
 Where that supplant hath his juise.  
 Wherof that thou the might avise  
 Upon this enformacion  
 Touchend of supplantacion,  
 That thou, my sone, do nought so  
 And for to take hede also  
 What supplant doth in other halve  
 There is no man can finde a salve  
 Pleinly to helen suche a fore.  
 It hath and shall ben evermore,  
 Whan pride is with envie joint,  
 He suffreth no man in good point,  
 Where that he may his honour let.  
 And therupon if I shall set  
 Ensamble, in holy chirche I finde  
 How that supplant is nought behinde.  
 God wote, if that it now be so.  
 For in cronique of time ago  
 I finde a tale concordable  
 Of supplant, which that is no fable,  
 In the maner as I shall telle  
 So as whilom the thinges felle.

At Rome as it hath ofte falle  
 The viker generall of alle  
 Of hem that leven Cristes feith  
 His laste day, which none with-faith,  
 Hath shette as to the worldes eye,  
 Whos name, if I shall specifie,

Hic ponit confessor  
 exemplum contra i-  
 stos in causa digni-  
 tatis acquirende sup-  
 plantatores. Et nar-  
 rat, qualiter papa Bo-  
 nefacius predecesso-  
 rem suum Celestinum  
 a papatu contrajec-  
 tata circumvencione



fraudulenter supplantavit. Sed qui potentes a sede deponit, huiusmodi supplantationis fraudem non sustinens, ipsum sic in sublime exaltatum postea in profundi carceris miseriam proici fameque siti cruciari nec non et ab huius vite gaudiis dolorosa morte supplantari finali conclusione permisit.

He highte pope Nicholas.

And thus whan that he passed was,

The cardinals, that wolden save

The forme of lawe in the conclave,

Gon for to chese a newe pope,

And after that they couthe agrope

Hath eche of hem said his entent.

Til ate laste they assent

Upon an holy clerk recluse,

Which full was of gostly vertuse.

His pacience and his simplesse

Hath set him into highe nobleffe.

Thus was he pope canonised

With great honour and intronised.

And upon chaunce, as it is falle,

His name Celestin men calle,

Which notified was by bulle

To holy chirche and to the fulle

In alle londes magnified.

But every worship is envied,

And that was thilke time sene.

For whan this pope, of whome I mene,

Was chose and other set beside,

A cardinal was thilke tide,

Which the papate long hath desired

And therupon gretely conspired.

But whan he sigh fortune is failed,

For which long time he hath travailed,

That ilke fire, whiche Ethna brenneth,

Throughout his wofull herte renneth,

Whiche is resembled to envie,  
Wherof supplant and trecherie  
Engendred is. And netheles  
He feigneth love, he feigneth pees.  
Outward he doth the reverence,  
But all within his conscience  
Through fals ymaginacion  
He thoughte supplantacion.  
And therupon a wonder wile  
He wrought. For at thilke while  
It fel so, that of his lignage  
He hadde a clergeon of yonge age,  
Whom he hath in his chambre affaited.

This cardinal his time hath waited  
And with his wordes sly and queint,  
The whiche he couthe wisely peint,  
He shope this clerke, of whiche I telle,  
Toward the pope for to dwelle,  
So that within his chamber a night  
He lay, and was a prive wight  
Toward the pope on nightes tide.  
May no man fle, that shall betide.

This cardinal, which thoughte guile,  
Upon a day, whan he hath while,  
This yonge clerke unto him toke  
And made him swere upon a boke  
And tolde him what his wille was.  
And forth with al a trompe of bras  
He hath him take and bad him this :  
Thou shalt, he saide, whan time is

Awaite and take right good kepe,  
 Whan that the pope is fast aslepe  
 And that none other man be nigh.  
 And thanne that thou be so fligh  
 Through out the trompe into his ere,  
 Fro heven as though a vois it were,  
 To sounne of such prolacion,  
 That he his meditacion  
 Therof may take and understonde,  
 As though it were of goddes sonde.  
 And in this wise thou shalt say,  
 That he do thilk estate away  
 Of pope, of whiche he stant honoured,  
 So shall his soule be socoured  
 Of thilke worship ate last  
 In heven, which shall ever last.

This clerk, whan he hath herd the form,  
 How he the pope shuld enform,  
 Toke of the cardinal his leve  
 And goth him home, till it was eve.  
 And prively the trompe he hadde,  
 Til that the pope was a bedde.  
 And at the midnight, whan he knewe  
 The pope slepte, than he blewe  
 Within his trompe through the wall  
 And tolde, in what maner he shall  
 His papacie leve and take  
 His firste estate. And thus awake  
 This holy pope he made thries,  
 Wherof diverse fantasies



Upon his grete holinesse  
Within his hert he gan impresse.  
The pope full of innocence  
Conceiveth in his conscience  
That it is goddes wil, he cesse.  
But in what wise he may releffe  
His highe estate, that wote he nought.  
And thus within him selfe be thought,  
He bare it stille in his memoire,  
Till he cam to the confistoire,  
And there in presence of hem alle  
He axeth if it so befalle,  
That any pope cesse wolde,  
How that the lawe it suffre sholde.  
They seten alle stille, and herde  
Was none, which to the point answerde.  
For to what purpos that it ment,  
There was no man knew his entent  
But only he, which shop the guile.

This cardinal the same while  
All openly with wordes pleine  
Saith if the pope woll ordeigne,  
That there be suche a lawe wrought,  
Than might he cesse, and elles nought.

And as he saide, done it was.  
The pope anone upon the cas  
Of his papall auctorite  
Hath made and yove the decre.  
And whan the lawe was confermed  
In due forme and all affermed,

This innocent, which was deceived,  
 His papacie anone hath weived,  
 Renounced and resigned eke.  
 That other was no thing to feke,  
 But undernethe fuche a jape  
 He hath so for him selfe shape,  
 That how as ever it him beseme  
 The mitre with the diademe  
 He hath through supplantacion  
 And in his confirmacion  
 Upon the fortune of his grace.  
 His name was cleped Boneface.

Under the viser of envie  
 Lo, thus was hid the trecherie,  
 Whiche hath beguiled many one.  
 But such counseil there may be none  
 Which trefon, whan it is conspired,  
 That it nis lich the sparke fired  
 Up in the roof, which for a throwe  
 Lith hid, til whan the windes blowe,  
 It blaseth out on every side.  
 This Boneface, which can nought hide  
 The trecherie of his supplaunt,  
 Hath openly made his avaunt,  
 How he the papacie hath wonne.  
 But thing which is with wrong begonne  
 May never stonde wel at ende.  
 Where pride shall the bowe bende,  
 He shet ful oft out of the way.  
 And thus the pope, of whom I say,

Whan that he stood on high the whele,  
 He can nought suffre himself be wele.  
 Envie, whiche is loveles,  
 And pride, whiche is laweles,  
 With such tempeste made him erre,  
 That charite goth out of herre.  
 So that upon misgovernaunce  
 Ayein Lewis the king of Fraunce  
 He toke quarell of his oultrage  
 And said, he shulde don homage  
 Unto the chirche bodely.  
 But he, that wist no thinge why  
 He shulde do so great service  
 After the worlde in suche a wise,  
 Withstood the wrong of that demaunde,  
 For nought the pope may commaunde  
 The king woll nought the pope obeie.  
 This pope tho by alle weie,  
 That he may worche of violence,  
 Hath sent the bulle of his sentence  
 With cursinge and enterdite.  
 The king upon this wrongfull plite  
 To kepe his regne from servage,  
 Counseiled was of his barnage,  
 That might with might shall be withstond.  
 Thus was the cause tak on hond,  
 And faiden, that the papacie  
 They wolden honour and magnifie  
 In all that ever is spirituall,  
 But thilke pride temporall



Of Boneface in his persone  
 Ayein that ilke wronge alone  
 They wolden stonde in debate,  
 And thus the man and nought the state  
 The Frenshe shopen by her might  
 To greve. And fel there was a knight  
 Sire Guilliam de Langharet,  
 Which was upon this cause set.  
 And therupon he toke a route  
 Of men of armes and rode oute  
 So longe and in a waite he lay,  
 That he aspied upon a day  
 The pope was at Avinon  
 And shulde ride out of the town  
 Unto Pontforge, the whiche is  
 A castell in Provence of his.  
 Upon the way and as he rode,  
 This knight, whiche hoved and abode  
 Embuisshed upon horsebake,  
 All sodeinlich upon him brake,  
 And hath him by the bridell fessed  
 And said: O thou, which hast disefed  
 The courte of Fraunce by thy wronge,  
 Now shalt thou singe an other songe.  
 Thin enterdite and thy sentence  
 Ayein thin owne conscience  
 Hereafter thou shalt fele and grope.  
 We pleigne nought ayein the pope,  
 For thilke name is honourable,  
 But thou, whiche hast be deceivable

And trecherous in all thy werke,  
Thou Boneface, thou proude clerke,  
Miseder of the papacie,  
Thy false body shall abie  
And suffre, that it hath deserved.

Lo, thus this supplantor was served.  
For they him ladde into Fraunce  
And setten him to his penaunce  
Within a toure in harde bondes,  
Where he for hunger both his hondes  
Ete of and died, god wote how.  
Of whome the writinge is yet now  
Registred as a man may here,  
Which speketh and saith in this maner :

Thin entre lich a fox was fligh,  
Thy regne also with pride on high  
Was lich the leon in his rage,  
But ate laste of thy passage  
Thy deth was to the houndes like.

Suche is the letter of his cronique  
Proclamed in the court of Rome,  
Wherof the wise ensample nome.  
And yet as ferforth as I dare,  
I rede all other men beware  
And that they loke well algate,  
That none his owne estate translate  
Of holy chirche in no degre  
By fraude ne by subtilte.  
For thilke honour whiche Aaron toke  
Shall none receive as saith the boke,

*Chronica Bonefacii. Intraſti ut vulpis, regnaſti ut leo, et mortuus es ut canis, etc.*

But he becleped as he was.  
 What shall I thenken in this cas  
 Of that I here nowe a day?  
 I not, but he which can and may  
 By reson both and by nature  
 The helpe of every mannes cure  
 He kepe Simon fro the folde.

Nota de propheta  
 Joachim abbatis.  
 Quanti mercenarii  
 erunt in ovile dei,  
 tuas aures meis nar-  
 rationibus fedare  
 volo.

For Joachim, thilke abbot tolde,  
 How suche daies shulden falle,  
 That comunlich in places alle  
 The chapmen of such mercerie  
 With fraude and with supplantarie  
 So many shulden beie and felle,  
 That he ne may for shame telle  
 So foule a finne in mannes ere.  
 But god forbede, that it were  
 In oure daies, that he faith.  
 For if the clerk beware his faith,  
 In chapmanhode at suche a faire  
 The remenaunt mot nede empeire  
 Of all that to the world belongeth.  
 For whan that holy chirche wrongeth,  
 I not what other thing shall righte.  
 And netheles at mannes fighte  
 Envie for to be preferred  
 Hath conscience so differred,  
 That no man loketh to the vice,  
 Whiche is the moder of malice,  
 And that is thilke fals envie,  
 Which causeth many a trecherie.



For where he may another se  
That is more gracious than he,  
It shall nought stonden in his might,  
But if he hinder suche a wight.  
And that is well nigh over all  
This vice is now so generall.

Envie thilke unhap indrough,  
Whan Joab by decepte slough  
Abner, for drede he shulde be  
With king David such as was he.

And through envie also it felle  
Of thilke fals Achitofelle,  
For his counseil was nought acheved,  
But that he figh Cusy beleved  
With Absolon and him forsake,  
He henge him selfe upon a stake.

Senec witnesfeth openly,  
How that envie properly  
Is of the court the comun wenche.  
And halt taverne for to schenche  
That drink, which maketh the hert brenne,  
And doth the wit aboute renne  
By every waie to compasse,  
How that he might all other passe  
As he, which through unkindeship  
Envieth every felaship.  
So that thou might well knowe and se,  
There is no vice suche as he  
First toward god abhominable  
And to mankinde unprofitable.

Qualiter Joab princeps milicie David invidie causa Abner subdole interfecit. Et qualiter eciam Achitofell ob hoc, quod Cusy in consilio Absolon preferebatur, accensus invidia laqueo se suspendit.

And that by wordes but a few  
I shall by reason prove and shewe.

6. *Invidie stimulus sine causa ledit abortus,  
Nam sine temptante crimine crimen habet.  
Non est huius opus temptare Cupidinis archum,  
Dumque faces Veneris Ethnica flamma vorat,  
Absque rubore gene pallor, quas fuscus obumbrat,  
Frigida nature cetera membra docent.*

Hic describit confessor naturam invidie tam in amore quam aliter secundum proprietatem vicii sub compendio.

Envie if that I shall describe,  
He is nought shaply for to wive  
In erth among the women here.  
For there is in him no matere,  
Wherof he mighte do plesaunce.  
First for his hevy contenaunce  
Of that he semeth ever unglad  
He is nought able to be hadde  
And eke he brenneth so withinne,  
That kinde may no profit winne,  
Wherof he shulde his love plesse.  
For thilke blood, which shuld have ese  
To regne among the moiste veines,  
Is drie of thilke unkindly peines  
Through which envie is fired ay.  
And this by reason prove I may,  
That toward love envie is nought,  
And other wise if it be sought,  
Upon what side as ever it falle  
It is the werste vice of alle,  
Which of him self hath most malice.  
For understond that every vice  
Some cause hath, wherof it groweth.  
But of envie no man knoweth

Fro whenne he cam, but out of helle.  
 For thus the wise clerkes telle,  
 That no spirit but of malice  
 By way of kinde upon a vice  
 Is tempted, and by such a way  
 Envie hath kinde put away  
 And of malice hath his sterling,  
 Wherof he maketh his bakbiting,  
 And is him self therof disefed.  
 So may there be no kinde plesed.  
 For ay the more that he envieth,  
 The more ayein him self he plieth.  
 Thus stant envie in good espeire  
 To ben him self the divels heire  
 As he, whiche is his nexte liche  
 And furthest from the heven riche.  
 For there may he never wone.

Forthy my gode dere sone,  
 If thou wolt finde a siker way  
 To love, put envie away.

Min holy fader, reson wolde,  
 That I this vice escheue sholde.  
 But yet to strengthen my corage  
 If that ye wolde in avauntage  
 Therof set a recoverir,  
 It were to me a great desir,  
 That I this vice mighte flee.

Now understond, my sone, and see,  
 There is phisique for the seke  
 And vertues for the vices eke.



Who that the vices wolde escheue,  
 He mot by reson thanne sue  
 The vertues. For by thilke way  
 He may the vices done away.  
 For they to-gider may nought dwelle.  
 For as the water of the welle  
 Of fire abateth the malice,  
 Right so vertu fordoth the vice.

Ayein envie is charite,  
 Whiche is the moder of pite,  
 That maketh a mannes herte tender,  
 That it may no malice engender  
 In him, that is inclined therto.  
 For his corage is tempred so,  
 That though he might him self releve,  
 Yet wolde he nought another greve,  
 But rather for to do plesaunce  
 He bereth him selven the grevaunce,  
 So fain he wolde another ese.  
 Wherof, my sone, for thin ese  
 Now herken a tale, whiche I rede,  
 And understonde it well I rede.

Hic ponit confessor  
 exemplum de virtute  
 charitatis contra in-  
 vidiam et narrat de  
 Constantino Elene fi-  
 lio, qui cum imperii  
 Romani dignitatem  
 obtinuerat, a morbo  
 lepre infectus, medici  
 pro sanitate recupe-  
 randa ipsum in san-  
 guine puerorum mas-  
 culorum balneare  
 proposuerant, sed cum

Among the bokes of latin  
 I finde it writ of Constantin,  
 The worthy emperour of Rome,  
 Such infortunes to him come,  
 Whan he was in his lusty age,  
 The lepre caught in his visage  
 And so forth over all aboute,  
 That he ne mighte riden oute.

So left he bothe shield and spere,  
As he that might him nought bestere,  
And helde him in his chamber close.  
Through all the world the fame arofe.

The grete clerkes ben assent  
And com at his commaundement  
To tret upon this lordes hele.  
So longe they to-gider dele,  
That they upon this medicine  
Appointen hem and determine,  
That in the maner as it stood  
They wolde him bath in childes blood  
Withinne seven winter age.  
For as they fain, that shulde assuage  
The leper and all the violence,  
Which that they knewe of accidence  
And nought by way of kinde is falle.  
And therto they accorden alle  
As for finall conclusion  
And tolden her opinion  
To themperour. And he anone  
His counseil toke, and therupon  
With letters and with seales out  
They send in every londe about  
The yonge children for to seche,  
Whose blood, they said, shulde be leche  
For themperours maladie.

There was inough to wepe and crie  
Among the moders, whan they herde,  
How wofully this cause ferde.

innumera multitudo  
matrum cum filiis huiusmodi medicine causa in circuitu palatii affuisset imperatorque eorum gemitus et clamores percepisset, charitate motus ingemiscens sic ait: O vere est ipse dominus, qui se facit servum pietatis. Et his dictis statum suum cunctipotentis medele committens, sui ipsius morbum potius quam infancium mortem benignius elegit, unde ipse, qui antea paganus et leprosus extiterat, ex unda baptismatis renatus utriusque materie tam corporis quam anime divino miraculo consecutus est salutem.



But netheles they moten bowe,  
 And thus women there come inowe,  
 With children soukend on the tete  
 Tho was there many teres lete.

But were hem liefse or were hem loth,  
 The women and the children both  
 Into the paleis forth be brought  
 With many a sory hertes thought  
 Of hem, whiche of her body bore  
 The children hadde, and so forlore  
 Within a while shulden se.

The moders wepe in her degre  
 And many of hem a swoone falle,  
 The yonge babies crieden alle.  
 This noyse arofe, this lorde it herde  
 And loked out, and how it ferde  
 He sigh, and as who faith abraide  
 Out of his slepe and thus he saide :

O thou divine purveaunce,  
 Which every man in the balaunce  
 Of kinde hast formed to be liche,  
 The pouer is bore as is the riche  
 And dieth in the same wise,  
 Upon the fole, upon the wise  
 Siknesse and hele enter comune,  
 May none escheue that fortune,  
 Which kinde in her lawe hath sette.  
 Her strengthe and beaute ben besette  
 To every man aliche free,  
 That she preferreth no degree



As in the disposicion  
Of bodely complexion.  
And eke of foule resonable  
The pouer childe is bore as able  
To vertue as the kinges sone.  
For every man his owne wone  
After the lust of his assay  
The vice or vertue chese may.  
Thus stonden alle men fraunchised,  
But in estate they ben devised,  
To some worship and richeffe,  
To some pouerte and distresse.  
One lordeth and an other serveth,  
But yet as every man deserveth  
The world yeveth nought his yestes here.  
But certes he hath great matere  
To ben of good condicion,  
Whiche hath in his subjection  
The men, that ben of his semblaunce.  
And eke he toke his remembraunce,  
How he that made lawe of kinde  
Wolde every man to lawe binde  
And bad a man, fuche as he wolde,  
Toward him self right such he sholde  
Toward an other done also.

And thus this worthy lord as tho  
Set in balaunce his owne estate  
And with him self stood in debate  
And thoughte, howe it was nought good  
To se so mochel mannes blood

Be spilt by cause of him alone.

He sigh also the grete mone  
Of that the moders were unglad  
And of the wo the children made,  
Wherof that all his herte tendreth  
And such pite within engendreth,  
That him was lever for to chese  
His owne body for to lese,  
Than se so great a mordre wrought  
Upon the blood, which gilteth nought.  
Thus for the pite, whiche he toke,  
All other leches he forfoke  
And put him out of aventure  
Alonly into goddes cure  
And saith: who that woll maister be  
He mot be fervaunt to pite.  
So ferforth he was overcome  
With charite, that he hath nome  
His counseil and his officers,  
And badde unto his treforers,  
That they his trefour all about  
Depart among the pouer route  
Of women and of children both,  
Wherof they might hem fede and cloth  
And fausly tornen home ayein  
Withoute los of any grein.  
Through charite thus he dispendeth  
His good, wherof that he amendeth  
The pouer people and countrevailleth  
The harm, that he hem so travaileth.

And thus the wofull nightes forwe  
To joie is torned on the morwe.  
All was thanking, all was blessing,  
Whiche erst was wepinge and cursing.  
These women gone home glad inough,  
Echone for joie on other lough  
And praiden for this lordes hele,  
Whiche hath relefed the quarele  
And hath his owne will forsake  
In charite for goddes sake.  
But now hereafter thou shalte here  
What god hath wrought in this matere,  
As he that doth all equite.  
To him that wroughte charite  
He was ayeinward charitous  
And to pite he was pitous.  
For it was never knowe yit,  
That charite goth unaquit.  
The night whan he was laid to slepe,  
The highe god, which wold him kepe,  
Saint Peter and saint Poule him sende,  
By whom he wolde his lepre amende.  
They two to him slepend appere  
Fro god and said in this manere :

O Constantin, for thou hast served  
Pite, thou hast pite deserved.  
Forthy thou shalt such pite have,  
That god through pite woll the save.  
So shalt thou double hele finde,  
First for thy bodeliche kinde,



And for thy wofull foule also.  
 Thou shalt ben hole of bothe two.  
 And for thou shalt the nought despeire,  
 Thy lepre shall no more empeire  
 Till thou wolt sende therupon  
 Unto the mount of Celion,  
 Where that Silvester and his clergie  
 To-gider dwelle in compaignie  
 For drede of the, which many a day  
 Haft ben a fo to Cristes lay  
 And hast destruied to mochel shame  
 The prechours of his holy name.  
 But now thou hast somdele appesed  
 Thy god and with good dede plesed,  
 That thou thy pite hast bewared  
 Upon the blood, which thou hast spared.  
 Forthy to thy salvacion  
 Thou shalt have informacion,  
 Such as Silvester shall the teche,  
 The nedeth of none other leche.  
 This emperour, whiche all this herde :  
 Graunt mercy lorde, he answerde,  
 I woll do so as ye me say.  
 But of o thing I wolde pray,  
 What shall I telle unto Silvestre  
 Or of your name or of your estre ?  
 And they him tolden what they hight  
 And forth with all oute of his sight  
 They passen up into the heven.  
 And he awoke out of his sweven

And clepeth, and men come anone  
And tolde his dreame, and thereupon  
In suche a wise as he hem telleth  
The mount, wher that Silvester dwelleth,  
They have in alle haste sought,  
And founde he was, and with hem brought  
To the emperor, which to him tolde  
His sweven and elles what he wolde.  
And whan Silvester hath herd the king,  
He was right joyfull of this thing  
And him began with all his wit  
To techen upon holy writ.  
First how mankinde was forlore,  
And how the highe god therfore  
His sone sende from above,  
Which bore was for mannes love,  
And after of his owne chois  
He toke his deth upon the crois.  
And how in grave he was beloke,  
And how that he hath helle broke  
And toke hem out, that were him leve.  
And for to make us full beleve  
That he was verray goddes sone  
Ayein the kinde of mannes wone  
Fro deth he rose the thridde day.  
And whan he wolde, as he well may,  
He stigh up to his father even  
With flesh and blood into the heven.  
And right so in the same forme  
In flesh and blood he shall reforme,

Whan time cometh, the quicke and dede  
 At thilke wofull day of drede,  
 Where every man shall take his dome  
 Als well the maister as the grome.  
 The mighty kinges retenue  
 That day may stonde of no value  
 With worldes strengthe to defende.  
 For every man mot than entende  
 To stond upon his owne dedes  
 And leue all other mennes nedes.  
 That day may no counseil availe,  
 The pledour and the plee shall faile  
 The sentence of that ilke day,  
 May none appele sette in delay.  
 There may no gold the juge plie,  
 That he ne shall the sothe trie  
 And setten every man upright,  
 As well the plowman as the knight.  
 The leude man, the grete clerke  
 Shall stonde upon his owne werke,  
 And suche as he is founde tho,  
 Such shall he be for evermo.  
 There may no peine be relefed,  
 There may no joie ben encrefed,  
 But endeles as they have do  
 He shall receive one of two.

And thus Silvester with his sawe  
 The ground of all the newe lawe  
 With great devocion he precheth  
 Fro point to point and plainly techeth



Unto this hethen emperour  
And faith : the highe creatour  
Hath underfonge his charite  
Of that he wroughte fuche pite,  
Whan he the children had on honde.

Thus whan this lord hath understonde  
Of all this thing how that it ferde,  
Unto Silvester he than answerde  
With all his hole herte and faith,  
That he is redy to the feith.  
And so the vessell, which for blood  
Was made, Silvester, there it stood  
With clene water of the welle  
In alle haste he let do felle  
And sette Constantin therinne  
All naked up unto the chinne.  
And in the while it was begunne  
A light, as though it were a sunne,  
Fro heven into the place come,  
Where that he toke his chrestendome,  
And ever amonge the holy tales  
Lich as they weren fishes scales  
They fellen from him now and este,  
Till that there was nothing belefte  
Of all this grete maladie.  
For he that wolde him purifie  
The highe god hath made him clene,  
So that there lefte nothing sene.  
He hath him clenfed bothe two  
The body and the soule also.

Tho knew this emperour in dede,  
 That Cristes feith was for to drede,  
 And sende anone his letters out  
 And let do crien all aboute  
 Up peyn of deth, that no man weive,  
 That he baptisme ne receive.  
 After his moder quene Eleine  
 He sende, and so betwene hem tweine  
 They treten, that the citee all  
 Was christned, and she forth with all.  
 This emperour, which hele hath found,  
 Withinne Rome anone let founde  
 Two churches, whiche he did make  
 For Peter and for Poules sake,  
 Of whom he hadde a vision  
 And yaf therto possession  
 Of lordship and of worldes good.  
 But how so that his will was good  
 Toward the pope and his fraunchise,  
 Yet hath it proved otherwise  
 To se the worching of the dede.  
 For in cronique thus I rede  
 Anone as he hath made the yeste  
 A vois was herde on high the leste,  
 Of which all Rome was adradde  
 And said: this day is venim shadde  
 In holy chirche of temporall,  
 Which medleth with the spirituall.  
 And how it stant of that degre  
 Yet a man may the sothe se,

God may amende it, whan he wille,  
I can therto none other skille.

But for to go there I began,  
How charite may helpe a man  
To bothe worldes, I have faide.  
And if thou have an ere laide,  
My sone, thou might understonde,  
If charite be take on honde,  
There folweth after mochel grace.  
Forthy if that thou wolt purchace  
How that thou might envie flee,  
Acqueinte the with charite,  
Whiche is the vertue fovereine.

Confessor.

My fader, I shall do my peine.  
For this ensample whiche ye tolde  
With all min herte I have witholde,  
So that I shall for evermore  
Escheue envie well the more.  
And that I have er this misdo  
Yive me my penaunce er I go.  
And over that to my matere  
Of shrifte, why we fitten here  
In privete betwene us twey,  
Now axeth, what there is I prey.

Amans.

My gode sone, and for thy lore  
I woll the telle, what is more,  
So that thou shalt the vices knowe.  
For whan they be to the full knowe,  
Thou might hem wel the better eschue.  
And for this cause I thenke fue

Confessor.



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The forme bothe and the matere,  
As now suende thou shalt here,  
Which vice stant nexte after this.  
And whan thou wost, how that it is,  
As thou shalt here my devise,  
Thou might thy self the better avise.

*Explicit liber secundus.*



### Incipit Liber Tercius.

*Ira suis paribus est par furiis Acherontis,  
 Quo furor ad tempus nil pietatis habet.  
 Ira malencolicos animos perturbat, ut equo  
 Fure sui pondus nulla statera tenet.  
 Omnibus in causis gravat ira sed inter amantes,  
 Illa magis facili sorte gravamen agit.  
 Est ubi vir discors leviterque repugnat amori,  
 Sepe loco ludi fletus ad ora venit.*

1.



F thou the vices list to knowe,  
 My sone, it hath nought be  
 unknowe  
 Fro first, that men their  
 swerdes grounde,

That there nis one upon this grounde  
 A vice foreine fro the lawe,  
 Wherof that many a good felawe  
 Hath be deftraught by sodein chaunce.  
 And yet to kinde no plesauce  
 It doth, but where he most acheveth  
 His purpose most to kinde he greveth  
 As he, whiche out of conscience  
 Is enemy unto pacience.  
 And is by name one of the seven,  
 Whiche oft hath set the world uneven,

Hic in tercio libro  
 tractat super quin-  
 que speciebus ire,  
 quarum prima ma-  
 lencolia dicitur,  
 cuius viciū con-  
 fessor primo descri-  
 bens amanti super  
 eodem consequen-  
 ter opponit.

And cleped is the cruel ire,  
 Whose herte is evermore on fire  
 To speke amis and to do bothe,  
 For his servaunts ben ever wrothe.

*Amans.* My gode fader, tell me this

*Confessor.* What thinge is ire? Sone, it is  
 That in our english wrath is hote,  
 Whiche hath his wordes ay so hote,  
 That all a mannes pacience  
 Is fired of the violence.

For he with him hath ever five  
 Servaunts, that helpen him to strive.  
 The first of hem malencoly  
 Is cleped, whiche in compaignie  
 An hundred times in an houre  
 Woll as an angry beste loure,  
 And no man wot the cause why.  
 My sone, thrive the now forthy,  
 Hast thou be malencolien?

*Amans.* Ye fader, by faint Julien.

But I untrewed wordes use  
 I may me nought therof excuse.  
 And all maketh love well I wote,  
 Of which min herte is ever hote,  
 So that I brenne as dothe a glede  
 For wrathe, that I may nought spede.  
 And thus full oft a day for nought  
 Saufe onlich of min owne thought  
 I am so with my selven wroth,  
 That how so that the game goth



With other men I am nought glad.  
But I am well the more unglad,  
For that is other mennes game  
It torneth me to pure grame.  
Thus am I with my self oppressed  
Of thought the whiche I have impressed,  
That all wakend I dreme and mete,  
That I with her alone mete  
And pray her of some good answere.  
But for she wol nought gladly swere,  
She faith me nay withouten othe.  
And thus waxe I withinne wrothe  
That outward I am all affraied  
And so distempred and so esmaied.  
A thousand times on a day  
There souneth in min eres nay,  
The which she saide me to-fore.  
Thus be my wittes all forlore.  
And namely whan I beginne  
To reken with my self withinne,  
How many yeres ben agone,  
Sith I have truely loved one  
And never toke of her other hede  
And ever a liche for to spede,  
I am, the more I with her dele,  
So that min hap and all min hele  
Me thenketh is ay the lenger the ferre.  
That bringeth my gladship out of erre,  
Wherof my wittes ben empeired  
And I, as who faith, all dispeired,

For finally whan that I muse  
And thenke, how she woll me refuse,  
I am with anger so bestad,  
For al this world might I be glad.  
And for the while that it lasteth  
All up so down my joie it casteth,  
And ay the further that I be  
Whan I ne may my lady se,  
The more I am redy to wrathe,  
That for the touching of a lath  
Or for the torning of a stre  
I wode as doth the wilde see  
And am so malencolious,  
That there nis servaunt in min house  
Ne none of tho, that be aboute,  
That eche of hem ne stant in doute  
And wenen, that I shulde rave  
For anger, that they se me have.  
And so they wonder more and lasse,  
Til that they seen it overpasse.  
But fader, if it so betide,  
That I approche at any tide  
The place, where my lady is,  
And thanne that her like iwis  
To speke a goodly word unto me,  
For all the gold that is in Rome  
Ne couth I after that be wroth,  
But all min anger overgoth.  
So glad I am of the presence  
Of her, that I all offence

For yete, as though it were nought  
So over glad is my thought.  
And netheles, the soth to telle,  
Ayeinward if it so befelle,  
That I at thilke time sigh,  
On me that she miscaste her eye  
Or that she liste nought to loke  
And I therof good hede toke,  
Anone into my first estate  
I torne and am with that so mate,  
That ever it is a liche wicke.  
And thus min honde ayein the pricke  
I hurte and have don many a day  
And go so forth as I go may  
Full ofte biting on my lippe  
And make unto my self a whippe,  
With whiche in many a chele and hete  
My wofull herte is so to bete,  
That all my wittes ben unsofte  
And I am wrothe, I not how ofte.  
And all it is malencolie,  
Which groweth on the fantasie  
Of love, that me woll nought loute.  
So bere I forth an angry snoute  
Full many times in a yere.  
But fader, now ye sitten here  
In loves stede, I you besèche,  
That some ensample ye me teche,  
Wherof I may my self appese.  
My sone, for thin hertes ese

Confessor.



I shall fulfille thy praier,  
 So that thou might the better lere,  
 What mischefe that this vice stereth,  
 Whiche in his anger nought forbereth,  
 Wherof that after him forthenketh,  
 Whan he is fobre, and that he thenketh  
 Upon the folie of his dede.  
 And of this point a tale I rede.

Hic ponit confessor  
 exemplum contra istos,  
 qui cum vires amoris  
 non sunt realiter experti  
 contra alios amantes  
 malencolica severitate  
 ad iracundiam vindictę  
 provocantur, et narrat,  
 qualiter rex Eolus filium  
 nomine Macharium  
 et filiam nomine Canacem  
 habuit, qui cum ab infanciam  
 usque ad pubertatem invicem  
 educati fuerant, Cupido  
 tandem cum ignito jaculo  
 amorum cordis desideria  
 amorose penetravit,  
 itaque Canacis natura  
 cooperante a fratre suo  
 inpregnata parurit,  
 super quo pater intolerabilem  
 juventutis concupiscenciam  
 ignorans nimiaque furoris  
 malencolia preventus dictam  
 filiam cum partu dolorosissimo  
 casu interfici adjudicavit.

There was a king, whiche Eolus  
 Was hote, and it befell him thus,  
 That he two children hadde faire,  
 The sone cleped was Machaire,  
 The doughter eke Canace hight.  
 By day bothe and eke by night  
 While they be yonge of comun wone  
 In chambre they to-gider wone,  
 And as they shulden pleid hem ofte,  
 Till they be growen up alofte  
 In the youthe of lusty age,  
 Whan kind assaileth the corage  
 With love and doth him for to bowe,  
 That he no reson can allowe,  
 But halt the lawes of nature,  
 For whom that love hath under cure  
 As he is blinde him self, right so  
 He maketh his client blinde also.  
 In such maner, as I you telle,  
 As they all day to-gider dwelle,  
 This brother might it nought asterte,  
 That he with all his hole herte

His love upon his suster cast.  
 And so it felle hem ate last,  
 That this Machaire with Canace,  
 Whan they were in a prive place  
 Cupide bad hem first to kesse,  
 And after she, whiche is maistresse  
 In kinde and techeth every life  
 Withoute lawe positif, e,  
 Of which she taketh no maner charge,  
 But kepe her lawes all at large,  
 Nature toke hem into lore  
 And taught hem so, that overmore,  
 She hath hem in such wise daunted,  
 That they were, as who saith, enchaunted.  
 And as the blinde an other ledeth  
 And till they falle nothing dredeth,  
 Right so they hadde none insight,  
 But as a brid, which woll alight  
 And seeth the mete and nought the nette,  
 Whiche in deceit of him is sette,  
 These yonge folk no perill figh,  
 But that was liking in her eye.  
 So that they fell upon the chaunce,  
 Where wit hath lore his remembraunce,  
 So longe they to-gider assemble.  
 The wombe arose, and she gan tremble  
 And helde her in her chambre close  
 For drede it shulde be disclose.  
 And come unto her faders ere,  
 Wherof the sone had also fere,

And feigneth cause for to ride,  
 For longe durst he nought abide  
 In aunter if men wolde fain,  
 That he his suster hath forlain.  
 For yet she had it nought beknowe,  
 Whose was the childe at thilke throwe.  
 Machaire goth, Canace abit,  
 The which was nought delivered yit,  
 But right sone after that she was.

Now list and herken a wofull cas.  
 The sothe which may nought ben hid,  
 Was ate laste knowe and kid  
 Unto the king, how that it stood.  
 And whan that he it understood,  
 Anone into malencolie,  
 As though it were a frenesie,  
 He fell, as he which nothing couthe,  
 How maisterfull love is in youthe.  
 And for he was to love straunge  
 He wolde nought his herte chaunge  
 To be benigne and favourable  
 To love, but unmerciabie  
 Betwene the wawe of wode and wroth.  
 Into his daughters chambre he goth  
 And sigh the childe was late bore,  
 Wherof he hath his othes swore,  
 That she it shall full fore abie.  
 And she began mercy to crie  
 Upon her bare knees and praide  
 And to her fader thus she saide :



Have mercy fader, thenke I am  
Thy childe, and of thy blood I cam,  
That I misdede, youth it made  
And in the floodes bad me wade,  
Where that I figh no peril tho.  
But nowe it is befalle so,  
Mercy my fader, do no wreche.  
And with that worde she lost speche  
And fell down swounend at his fote,  
As she for sorwe nedes mote.  
But his horrible crueltie  
There might attempre no pite.  
Out of her chambre forth he wente  
All full of wrath in his entente  
And toke the counseil in his herte,  
That she shall nought the deth asterte.  
And he, whiche is malencolien,  
Of pacience hath nought lien  
Wherof his wrath he may restreigne.  
And in this wilde wode peine,  
Whan all his reson was untame,  
A knight he cleped by his name  
And toke him as by way of sonde  
A naked swerde to bere on honde,  
And said him, that he shulde go  
And telle unto his doughter so  
In the maner as he him bade,  
How she that sharpe swerdes blade  
Receive shulde and do withall,  
So that she wot whereto she shall.

Forth in message goth this knight  
 Unto this wofull yonge wight,  
 This sharpe swerd to her he toke,  
 Wherof that all her body quoke.  
 For well she wiste what it ment  
 And that it was to thilke entent,  
 That she her selven shulde flee.  
 And to the knight she saide : ye,  
 Now that I wot my faders will,  
 That I shall in this wise spill,  
 I woll obeie me therto,  
 And as he woll it shall be do.  
 But now this thing may be none other,  
 I woll a letter unto my brother,  
 So as my feble hond may write,  
 With all my wofull herte endite.  
 She toke a penne on honde tho  
 Fro point to point and all the wo  
 Als ferforth as her self it wote  
 Unto her dedly frend she wrote  
 And told, how that her faders grace  
 She mighte for nothing purchase.  
 And over that, as thou shalt here,  
 She wrote and said in this manere :

O thou my forwe and my gladnesse,  
 O thou my hele and my fikenesse,  
 O thou my wanhope and my trust,  
 O thou my disese and all my lust,  
 O thou my wele, O thou my wo,  
 O thou my frende, O thou my fo,

O thou my love, O thou my hate,  
For the mote I be dede algate.  
Thilk ende may I nought aſterte,  
And yet with all min hole herte,  
While that there laſteth me any breth,  
I woll the love unto my deth.  
But of o thinge I ſhall the preie,  
If that my litel ſone deie,  
Let him be buried in my grave  
Beside me, ſo ſhalt thou have  
Upon us bothe remembraunce.  
For thus it ſtondeth of my grevaunce,  
Now at this time, as thou ſhalt wite,  
With teres and with inke write  
This letter I have in cares colde.  
In my right hond my penne I holde,  
And in my leſte my ſwerde I kepe,  
And in my barme there lith to wepe  
Thy childe and min, which ſobbeth faſt.  
Nowe am I come unto my laſt,  
Fare well, for I ſhall ſone deie,  
And thenke, how I thy love abeie.

The pomel of the ſwerd to grounde  
She ſet, and with the point a wounde  
Through out her hert anone ſhe made  
And forth with that all pale and fade  
She fell down dede fro ther ſhe ſtood.  
The child lay bathend in her blood  
Out rolled fro the mother barme.  
And for the blood was hote and warme,



He basketh him about therinne.  
 Ther was no bote for to winne,  
 For he which can no pite knowe,  
 The king cam in the same throwe  
 And sigh, how that his doughter died  
 And how this babe all bloody cried.  
 But all that might him nought suffice,  
 That he ne bad to do juise  
 Upon the childe and bere him out  
 And seche in the forest about  
 Som wilde place, that it were  
 To cast him out of honde there,  
 So that some beste him may devoure,  
 Where as no man him shall socoure.  
 All that he bad was done in dede.  
 Ha, who herd ever sing or rede  
 Of suche a thinge, as that was do.  
 But he, which lad his wrathe so,  
 Hath knowe of love but a lite,  
 But for all that he was to wite  
 Through his sodein malencolie  
 To do so great a felonie.

Confessor. Forthy my sone, how so it stonde,  
 By this cas thou might understonde,  
 That if thou ever in cause of love  
 Shalt deme and thou be so above,  
 That thou might lede it at thy wille,  
 Let never through thy wrathe spille,  
 Whiche every kinde shulde save.  
 For it fit every man to have

Reward to love and to his might,  
 Ayein whos strengthe may no wight.  
 And sith an hert is so constreigned,  
 The reddour ought to be restreigned  
 To him that may us bet away,  
 Whan he mot to nature obey.  
 For it is said thus overall,  
 That nedes mot, that nedes shall  
 Of that a life doth after kinde,  
 Wherof he may no bote finde.  
 What nature hath set in her lawe,  
 Ther may no mannes might withdrawe,  
 And who that worcheth there ayein,  
 Full ofte time it hath be sein,  
 There hath befall great vengeaunce,  
 Wherof I finde a remembraunce.

Ovide after the time tho  
 Tolde an ensample and saide so,  
 How that whilom Tiresias,  
 As he walkend goth par cas  
 Upon an high mountein he sigh  
 Two serpentes in his waie nigh.  
 And they so, as nature hem taught,  
 Assembled were, and he tho cought  
 A yerde, which he bare on honde,  
 And thoughte, that he wolde fonde  
 To letten hem, and smote hem bothe,  
 Wherof the goddes weren wrothe.  
 And for he hath destourbed kinde  
 And was so to nature unkinde,

*He narrat, qualiter  
 Tiresias in quodam  
 monte duos serpen-  
 tes invenit pariter  
 commiscentes, quos  
 cum virga percussit,  
 Irati dii idcirco,  
 quod naturam in-  
 pedivit, ipsum con-  
 tra naturam a fur-  
 ca viri in mulie-  
 rem transmuta-  
 runt.*

Unkindelich he was transformed,  
 That he, which erst a man was formed,  
 Into a woman was forshape,  
 That was to him an angry jape.  
 But for that he with anger wrought  
 His anger angerliche he bought.

*Confessor.* Lo, thus my sone, Ovide hath write,  
 Wherof thou might by reson wite,  
 More is a man than fuche a beste,  
 So might it never ben honest  
 A man to wrathen him to fore  
 Of that another doth the lore  
 Of kinde, in whiche is no malice,  
 But only that it is a vice.  
 And though a man be resonable,  
 Yet after kinde he is mevable  
 To love, where he woll or none.  
 Thenk thou, my sone, therupon  
 And do malencolie away,  
 For love hath ever his lust to pley  
 As he, which wold no life greve.

*Amans.* My fader, that I may well leve  
 All that ye tellen it is skille,  
 Let every man love as he wille,  
 Be so it be nought my lady.  
 For I shall nought be wroth thereby.  
 But that I wrath and fare amis  
 Alone upon my self it is,  
 That I with bothe love and kinde  
 Am so bestad, that I can finde



No wey, howe I it may aſtert,  
Which ſtant upon min owne hert  
And toucheth to none other life  
Sauf onely to that ſwete wife,  
For whom, but if it be amended,  
My gladde daies ben diſpended.  
That I my ſelf ſhall nought forbere  
The wrath the whiche I now bere,  
For therof is none other liche,  
Nowe axeth forth I you beſeche  
Of wrathe, if there ought elles is,  
Wherof to thrive. Sone yis.

Confefſor.

*Ira movet litem, que lingue frena reſolvens  
Laxa per infames currit ubique vias.  
Rixarum nutrix quos educat iſta loquaces,  
Hos Venus a latere linquit habere vagos.  
Sed patienter agens taciturno qui celat ore,  
Vincet et optati carpit amoris iter.*

2.

Of wrathe the ſecond is cheſt,  
Which hath the windes of tempeſt  
To kepe, and many a ſodein blaſt  
He bloweth, wherof ben agaſt  
They, that deſiren pees and reſt.  
He is that ilke ungoodlieſt,  
Which many a luſty love hath twinned,  
For he bereth ever his mouth unpinned,  
So that his lippes ben unloke  
And his corage is all to-broke,  
That every thing, whiche he can telle,  
It ſpringeth up as doth a welle,  
Which may none of his ſtremes hide,  
But renneth out on every ſide.

*Hic tractat confeſſor ſuper ſecunda ſpecie ire, que ſic dicitur, ex cuius contumeliis innumeroſa dolorum occaſio tam in amoris cauſa quam aliter in quam pluribus ſepiſſime exorta eſt.*

So boilen up the foule sawes,  
That cheste wote of his felawes.  
For as a five kepeth ale,  
Right so can cheste kepe a tale,  
All that he wote, he woll disclose  
And speke er any man oppose.  
As a citee withoute a walle,  
Where men may gon out overalle  
Withouten any resistance,  
So with his croked eloquence  
He speketh all, that he wot withinne,  
Wherof men lese more than winne.  
For often time of his chiding  
He bringeth to house such tiding,  
That maketh werre at beddes hede.  
He is the levein of the brede,  
Which foureth all the past about.  
Men ought well suche one to doute.  
For ever his bowe is redy bent,  
And whome he hit I tell him shent,  
If he may perce him with his tonge.  
And eke so loude his belle is ronge,  
That of the noise and of the soun  
Men feren him in all the towne,  
Well more than they done of thonder.  
For that is cause of more wonder.  
For with the windes, which he bloweth,  
Full ofte sith he overthroweth  
The citees and the polecie,  
That I have herd the people crie

And echone saide in his degre :

Ha, wicke tunge, wo thou be.  
For men sain, that the harde bone  
All though him selve have none,  
A tunge braketh it all to pieces.  
He hath so many sondry spieces  
Of vice, that I may nought wele  
Describe hem by a thousand dele.  
But whan that he to cheste falleth,  
Full many a wonder thing befalleth,  
For he ne can no thing forbere.  
Now tell, my sone, thin answere,  
If it hath ever so betid,  
That thou at any time hast chid  
Toward thy love. Fader nay.  
Such cheste yet unto this day  
Ne made I never, god forbede.  
For er I singe sūche a crede,  
I hadde lever to be lewed,  
For thanne were I all beshrewed  
And worthy to be put abacke  
With all the sorwe upon my backe,  
That any man ordeigne couthe.  
But I spake never yet by mouthe  
That unto cheste mighte touche.  
And that I durst right wel avouche  
Upon her selfe, as for witnesse.  
For I wote of her gentileſſe,  
That she me wolde wel excuse,  
That I no sūche thinges use.

*Confessio amantis.*



And if it shulde so betid,  
 That I algates must chid,  
 It mighte nought be to my love.  
 For so yet was I never above  
 For all this wide world to winne,  
 That I durst any word beginne,  
 By which she might have ben amoved,  
 And I of cheste also reproved.  
 But rather if it might her like,  
 The beste wordes wolde I pike,  
 Whiche I couthe in min herte chese  
 And serve hem forth in stede of chese.  
 For that is helpelich to desie,  
 And so I wolde my wordes plie,  
 That mighten wrath and cheste avale  
 With telling of my softe tale.  
 Thus dar I make a forward,  
 That never unto my lady ward  
 Yet spake I word in suche a wise,  
 Wherof that cheste shulde arise.  
 Thus say I nought, that I full ofte  
 Ne have, whan I spake most softe,  
 Par cas said more than inough,  
 But so well halt no man the plough,  
 That he ne balketh other while.  
 Ne so wel can no man affile  
 His tunge, that somtime in rape  
 Him may some light word overscape,  
 And yet ne meneth he no cheste.  
 But that I have ayein her heste

Full ofte spoke, I am beknowe.  
And how my wille is that ye knowe,  
For whan my time cometh about,  
That I dar speke and say all out  
My longe love, of which she wot,  
That ever in one aliche hot  
Me greveth, than all my disese  
I telle, and though it her displese  
I speke it forth and nought ne leve.  
And though it be beside her leve  
I hope and trowe netheles,  
That I do nought ayein the pees.  
For though I telle her all my thought,  
She wot well, that I chide nought.  
Men may the highe god beseeche,  
And he wol here a mannes speche  
And be nought wroth of that he saith,  
So yiveth it me the more feith  
And maketh me hardy soth to say,  
That I dar wel the better prey  
My lady, whiche a woman is.  
For though I telle her that er is  
Of love, which me greveth fore,  
Her ought nought be wroth the more,  
For I withoute noise or cry  
My plaint make all buxomly  
To putten alle wrath away,  
Thus dar I say unto this day  
Of cheste, in ernest or in game,  
My lady shall me no thing blame.

But ofte time it hath betid,  
That with my selven I have chid,  
That no man couthe better chide,  
And that hath ben at every tide,  
Whan I cam to my selve alone.  
For than I made a prive mone  
And every tale by and by,  
Whiche as I spake to my lady,  
I thenke and peise in my balaunce  
And drawe into my remembraunce.  
And than, if that I finde a lacke  
Of any word, that I misspake,  
Which was to moche in any wise,  
Anone my wittes I despise  
And make a chiding in min herte,  
That any word me shulde asterte,  
Whiche as I shulde have holden inne.  
And so forth after I beginne  
And loke if there was elles ought  
To speke, and I ne spake it nought.  
And than if I may seche and finde,  
That any word ben left behinde,  
Whiche as I shuld more have spoke,  
I wold upon my self be wroke  
And chide with my selven so,  
That all my wit is over-go.  
For no man may his time lore  
Recover, and thus I am therfore  
So overwroth in all my thought,  
That I my self chide all to nought.



Thus for to moche, or for to lite  
Full ofte I am my self to wite.  
But all that may me nought availe  
With cheste though I me travaile,  
But oule on stoke and stoke on oule,  
The more that a man defoule,  
Men witen wel which hath the werse.  
And so to me nis worth a kerse,  
But torneth unto min owne hede,  
Though I tell, that I were dede,  
Wolde ever chide in suche a wise  
Of love, as I to you devise.  
But fader, now ye have all herd  
In this maner, howe I have ferd  
Of cheste and of diffension,  
Yif me your absolucion.

My sone, if that thou wifest all,  
What cheste doth in speciall  
To love and to his welwilling,  
Thou woldest fleen his knowleching  
And lerne to be debonaire.  
For who that most can speke faire  
Is most accordend unto love.  
Fair speche hath ofte brought above  
Full many a man, as it is knowe,  
Whiche elles shuld have ben right lowe  
And failed mochel of his wille.  
Forthy hold thou thy tunge stille  
And let thy wit thy will areste,  
So that thou falle nought in cheste,

Confessor.

300 *CONFESSIO AMANTIS.*

Whiche is the source of great distaunce,  
And take into thy remembraunce,  
If thou might gete pacience,  
Whiche is the leche of all offence,  
As tellen us these olde wise.

Seneca. Paciencia  
est vindicta omni-  
um injuriarum.

For whan nought elles may suffice  
By strengthe ne by mannes wit,  
Than pacience it over sit  
And over cometh it at laste.  
But he may never longe laste,  
Which woll nought bow er that he breke.  
Take hede, sone, of that I speke.

Amans.

My fader, of your goodly speche  
And of the wit, whiche ye me teche,  
I thonke you with all min hert.  
For that word shall me never astert,  
That I ne shall your wordes holde  
Of pacience, as ye me tolde,  
Als ferforth as min herte thenketh  
And of my wrath it me forthenketh.  
But fader, if ye forth with all  
Some good ensample in speciall  
Me wolden teche of some cronique,  
It shulde well min herte like  
Of pacience for to here,  
So that I might in my matere  
The more unto my love obey  
And putten my difese away.

Hic ponit confessor  
exemplum de pacien-  
cia in amore contra

My sone, a man to bye him pees  
Behoveth suffice as Socrates

Ensamble left, whiche is write,  
 And for thou shalt the sothe wite  
 Of this ensamble, what I mene,  
 All though it be now litel sene  
 Among the men thilke evidence,  
 Yet he was upon pacience  
 So set, that he him self assay  
 In thing, which might him most mispay,  
 Desireth and a wicked wife  
 He weddeth, which in forwe and strife  
 Ayein his ese was contraire.  
 But he spake ever soft and faire,  
 Till it befell, as it is tolde,  
 In winter, whan the day is colde,  
 This wife was fro the welle come,  
 Where that a pot with water nome  
 She hath and brought it into house,  
 And figh, how that her sely spouse  
 Was set and loked on a boke  
 Nigh to the fire as he, which toke  
 His ese as for a man of age.  
 And she began the wode rage  
 And axeth him, what diuel he thought  
 And bare on hond, that him ne rought  
 What labour that she toke on honde,  
 And saith, that suche an husbonde  
 Was to a wife nought worth a stre.  
 He saide nouthen nay ne ye,  
 But helde him stille and lete her chide.  
 And she, which may her self nought hide,

lites habenda, et nar-  
 rat, qualiter uxor So-  
 cratis ipsum quodam  
 die multis sermonibus  
 litigavit, sed cum ipse  
 absque ulla respon-  
 sione omnia probra  
 pacienter sustulit, in-  
 dignata uxor quan-  
 dam ydriam plenam  
 aque, quam in manu  
 tenebat, super caput  
 viri sui subito effudit,  
 dicens: evigila et lo-  
 quere, qui respondens  
 tunc ait: O vere jam  
 scio et expertus sum,  
 quod post ventorum  
 rabiem sequuntur ym-  
 bres. Et isto modo  
 litis contumeliam sua  
 paciencia devicit.



Began withinne for to swelle  
 And that she brought in fro the welle  
 The water pot she hent a losfe  
 And bad him speke, and he all softe  
 Sat stille and nought a word answerd.  
 And she was wroth, that he so ferd,  
 And axeth him, if he be dede,  
 And all the water on his hede  
 She poured out and bad him awake.  
 But he, whiche wol nought forsake  
 His pacience, thanne spake  
 And said, how that he fond no lake  
 In nothing which she hadde do,  
 For it was winter time tho  
 And winter, as by wey of kinde,  
 Which stormy is as men it finde,  
 First maketh the windes for to blowe  
 And after that within a throwe  
 He reineth and the water gates  
 Undoth, and thus my wife algates,  
 Which is with reson well besein,  
 Hath made me bothe winde and rein  
 After the seson of the yere.  
 And than he set him ner the fire  
 And as he might his clothes dreide,  
 That he nomore o word ne saide,  
 Wherof he gat him somdele rest,  
 For that him thought was for the best.

Confessor. I not if thilke ensample yit  
 Accordeth with a mannes wit

To suffre, as Socrates dede.  
And if it fal in any stede  
A man to lese so his galle,  
Him ought among the women alle  
In loves court by jugement  
The name bere of pacient  
To yive ensample to the good  
Of pacience how that it stood,  
That other men it mighte knowe.  
And sone, if thou at any throwe  
Be tempted ayein pacience,  
Take hede upon this evidence,  
It shall par cas the lasse greve.

My fader, so as I beleve  
Of that shall be no maner nede,  
For I woll take so good hede,  
That er I fall in suche assay  
I thenke escheue, if that I may.  
But if there be ought elles more,  
Wherof I mighte take lore  
I praie you, so as I dare,  
Now telleth, that I may beware,  
Some other tale of this mater.

Amans.

Sone, it is ever good to lere,  
Wherof thou might thy word restreigne,  
Er that thou falle in any peine.  
For who that can no counseil hide,  
He may nought faile of wo beside,  
Which shall befalle, er he it wite,  
As I finde in the bokes write.

Confessor.

Hic ponit confessor  
exemplum, quod de  
alterius lite intromit-  
tere cavendum est.  
Et narrat, qualiter  
Jupiter cum Junone  
super quadam ques-  
tione litigabat, vide-  
licet utrum vir an  
mulier in amoris con-  
cupiscencia fervenci-  
us ardebat, super quo  
Tiresiam eorum ju-  
dicem constituebant.  
Et quia ille contra  
Junonem in dicte litis  
causa sententiam dif-  
finivit, irata dea ipsum  
amborum oculorum  
lumine claritatis abs-  
que remissione priva-  
vit.

Yet cam there never good of strife  
To seche in all a mannes life,  
Though it beginne on pure game,  
Full ofte it torneth into grame  
And doth grevaunce on som side.  
Wherof the grete clerk Ovide  
After the lawe, which was tho,  
Of Jupiter and of Juno  
Maketh in his bokes mencion,  
How they felle at diffencion  
In maner as it were a borde,  
As they begunne for to worde  
Among hem self in privete.  
And that was upon this degre,  
Whiche of the two more amorous is  
Or man or wife. And upon this  
They mighten nought accorde in one  
And toke a juge therupon,  
Which cleped is Tiresias  
And bede him demen in this cas.  
And he withoute avisement  
Ayein Juno yaf judgement.  
This goddesse upon his answere  
Was wroth and wolde nought forbere,  
But toke away for evermo  
The light from both his eyen two.  
Whan Jupiter this harm hath sein  
Another bienfait there ayein  
He yaf and suche a grace him doth,  
That for he wiste he saide soth



A soth-faier he was for ever.  
 But yet that other were lever  
 Have had the loking of his eye  
 Than of his word the prophecie.  
 But how so that the sothe went,  
 Strife was the cause, of that he hent  
 So great a peine bodily.

My sone, be thou ware thereby  
 And hold thy tunge stille close,  
 For who that hath his word disclose  
 Er that he wite what he mene  
 He is full ofte nigh his tene  
 And leseth full many time grace,  
 Wher that he wold his thank purchase.  
 And over this, my sone dere,  
 Of other men, if thou might here  
 In privite, what they have wrought,  
 Hold counseil and discover it nought,  
 For cheste can no counseil hele,  
 Or be it wo or be it wele,  
 And take a tale into thy minde,  
 The which of olde ensample I finde.

Phebus, which maketh the daies light,  
 A love he hadde, which tho hight  
 Cornide, whom aboven alle  
 He pleseth. But what shall befalle  
 Of love, there is no man knoweth.  
 But as fortune her happes throweth,  
 So it befell upon a chaunce  
 A yonge knight toke her acqueintaunce

Confessor.

Quia litigantes ora sua  
 cohibere nequeunt,  
 hic ponit confessor  
 exemplum contra il-  
 los, qui in amoris  
 causa alterius consi-  
 lium revelare presu-  
 munt. Et narrat,  
 qualiter quedam avis  
 tunc albisissima nomine  
 Corvus, consilium do-  
 mine sue Cornide  
 Phebo denudavit,  
 unde contigit non fo-

lum ipsam Cornidem  
interfici, sed et Cor-  
vum, qui antea tan-  
quam nix albus fuit,  
in piceum colorem  
pro perpetuo trans-  
mutari.

And had of her all that he wolde.  
But a fals bird, which she hath holde  
And kept in chambre of pure youthe  
Discovereth all that ever he couthe.  
The briddes name was as tho  
Corvus, the which was than also  
Well more white than any swan,  
And he the shrewe all that he can  
Of his lady to Phebus saide.  
And he for wrath his swerd out braide,  
With which Cornide anone he slough,  
But after him was wo inough  
And toke a full great repentaunce,  
Wherof in token and remembraunce  
Of hem, whiche usen wicke speche,  
Upon this brid he toke his wreche,  
That there he was snow-white to-fore  
Ever afterward cole black therfore  
He was transformed, as it sheweth.  
And many a man yet him beshreweth  
And clepen him into this day  
A raven, by whom yet men may  
Take evidence, whan he crieth,  
That some mishap it signifieth.  
Beware therfore and say the best,  
If thou wolt be thy self in rest,  
My gode sone, as I the rede.

Hic loquitur super  
eodem et narrat, qua-  
liter Laar nimpha eo,  
quod Jupiter Jutu-  
nam adulteravit, Ju-

For in another place I rede  
Of thilke nimphe, which Laar hight.  
For she the privete by night,



How Jupiter lay by Jutorne,  
 Hath told, god made her overtorne,  
 Her tunge he cut and into helle  
 For ever he sent her for to dwelle,  
 As she that was nought worthy here  
 To ben of love a chamberere,  
 For she no counseil couthe hele.  
 And suche a daies be now fele  
 In loves courte, as it is faide,  
 That let her tungen gone unteide.  
 My sone, be thou none of tho  
 To jangle and telle tales so,  
 And namely that thou ne chide,  
 For cheste can no counseil hide,  
 For wrathe faide never wele.

My fader, sothe is every dele,  
 That ye me teche, and I woll holde  
 The reule to whiche I am holde,  
 To fle the cheste, as ye me bidde.  
 For well is him, that never chidde.  
 Now telle me forth if there be more,  
 As touchinge unto wrathes lore.

*Demonis est odium quasi scriba, cui dabit ira  
 Materiam scripti cordis ad antra sui.  
 Non laxabit amor, odii quem frena restringunt  
 Nec secreta sui juris adire scivit.*

Of wrathe yet there is another,  
 Whiche is to cheste his owne brother,  
 And is by name cleped hate,  
 That suffreth nought within his gate,

noni Jovis uxori se-  
 cretum revelavit.  
 Quapropter Jupiter  
 ira commotus lingua  
 Laaris prius abscissa  
 ipsam postea in pro-  
 fundum Acherontis  
 exulem pro perpetuo  
 mancipavit.

Amans.

3.

Hic tractat confes-  
 sor de tercia specie  
 ire, que odium di-  
 citur, cuius natu-  
 ra omnes ire inimi-  
 cicias ad mentem  
 reduci solent usque



ad tempus vindictæ  
velut scriba demonis  
in cordis papiro  
commemorandas  
inserit.

That there come other love or pees,  
For he wöll make no relese  
Of no debate, whiche is befallē.  
Now speke, if thou arte one of alle,  
That with this vice hath be witholde.

Amans. As yet for ought that ye me tolde,  
My fader, I not what it is.

Confessor. In good feith, sone, I trowe yis.

Amans. My fader, nay, but ye me lere.

Confessor. Now list, my sone, and thou shalt here.  
Hate is a wrathe nought shewend,  
But of long time gaderend,  
And dwelleth in the herte loken  
Till he se time to be wroken.  
And than he sheweth his tempest  
More sodein than the wilde beste,  
Which wot nothing, what mercy is.  
My sone, art thou knowen of this?

Confessio amantis. My gode fader, as I wene,  
Now wote I somedeale what ye mene,  
But I dare sauſly make an othe,  
My lady was me never lothe.  
I woll nought ſwere netheles,  
That I of hate am gilteles.  
For whan I to my lady ply  
Fro day to day and mercy cry,  
And she no mercy on me laith,  
But shorte wordes to me saith,  
Though I my lady love algate,  
Tho wordes mote I nedes hate

And wolde they were all dispent  
Or so fer out of londe went,  
That I never after shuld hem here.  
And yet love I my lady dere.  
Thus is there hate, as ye may se,  
Betwene my ladies word and me.  
The worde I hate and her I love,  
What so me shall betide of love.  
But furthermore I woll me thrive,  
That I have hated all my live  
These janglers, whiche of her envie  
Ben ever redy for to lie.  
For with her fals compassment  
Full often they have made me shent  
And hindred me full ofte time,  
Whan they no cause wisten byme,  
But onlich of her owne thought.  
And thus full ofte have I bought  
The lie and drank nought of the wine.  
I wolde her hap were such as mine.  
For how so that I be now thrive,  
To hem ne may I nought foryive,  
Till I se hem at debate  
With love, and thanne min estate  
They mighten by her owne deme  
And loke, how wel it shuld hem queme  
To hinder a man, that loveth fore.  
And thus I hate hem evermore,  
Til love on hem wold done his wreche,  
For that I shall alway besече

Unto the mighty Cupido,  
 That he so mochel wolde do,  
 So as he is of love a god,  
 To smite hem with the same rod,  
 With whiche I am of love smiten,  
 So that they mighten know and witen,  
 How hindring is a wofull peine  
 To him, that love wold atteigne.  
 Thus ever on hem I wait and hope,  
 Till I may se hem lepe a lope  
 And halten on the same fore,  
 Whiche I do now for evermore.  
 I wolde thanne do my might  
 So for to stonden in her light,  
 That they ne shulden have a wey  
 To that they wolden put away.  
 I wolde hem put out of the stede  
 Fro love, right as they me dede  
 With that they speke of me by mouthe,  
 So wolde I do, if that I couthe  
 Of hem, and thus so god me save  
 Is all the hate that I have  
 Toward these janglers every dele,  
 I wolde all other ferde wele.  
 Thus have I, fader, said my wille.  
 Say ye now forth, for I am stille.

Confessor. My sone, of that thou hast me said  
 I holde me nought fully paid,  
 That thou wold haten any man  
 To that accorden I ne can,



Though he have hindred the to-fore.  
But this I telle the therfore,  
Thou might upon my benifon  
Well haten the condicion  
Of tho janglers, as thou me toldest,  
But furthermore, of that thou woldest  
Hem hinder in any other wise,  
Suche hate is ever to despise.  
Forthy my sone, I wold the rede,  
That thou drawe in by frendly hede,  
That thou ne might nought do by hate,  
So might thou gete love algate  
And sette the, my sone, in rest.  
For thou shalt finde it for the best,  
And over this so as I dare  
I rede, that thou be right ware  
Of other mennes hate about,  
Whiche every wise man shulde dout,  
For hate is ever upon await.  
And as the fissher on his bait  
Sleeth, whan he seeth the fishes faste,  
So whan he seeth time ate last,  
That he may worche an other wo,  
Shall no man tornen him ther fro,  
That hate nill his felonie  
Fulfill and feigne compaignie.  
Yet netheles for fals semblaunt  
Is toward him of covenaut  
Witholde, so that under bothe  
The prive wrathe can him clothe,

That he shall seme a great beleve.  
 But ware the well, that thou ne leve  
 All that thou seeft to-fore thin eye,  
 So as the Gregois whilom figh,  
 The boke of Troie who fo rede,  
 There may he finde enfample in dede.

Hic ponit confessor  
 exemplum contra il-  
 los, qui cum ire sue  
 odium aperte vindi-  
 care non possint, ficta  
 dissimulatione vindic-  
 tam subdole assequen-  
 tur. Et narrat, quod  
 cum Palamides prin-  
 cepts Grecorum in ob-  
 sidione Troie a qui-  
 busdam suis emulis  
 proditorie interfectus  
 fuisset paterque suus  
 rex Nanplus in patria  
 sua tunc existens hu-  
 iusmodi eventus cer-  
 titudinem scivisset,  
 Grecos in sui cordis  
 odium super omnia  
 recollegit, unde con-  
 tigit, quod cum Greci  
 devicta Troia per al-  
 tum mare versus Gre-  
 ciam navigio remean-  
 tes obscurissimo noctis  
 tempore nimia vento-  
 rum tempestate jacta-  
 bantur, rex Nanplus  
 in terra sua contra li-  
 tus maris, ubi majora  
 saxorum eminebant  
 pericula super cacu-  
 mina moncium, gran-  
 dissimos noctanter fe-  
 cit ignes, quos Greci  
 aspicientes salvum  
 portum ibidem inve-  
 nire certissime puta-  
 bant, et terram ap-  
 proximantes diruptis  
 navibus magna pars  
 Grecorum periclitata-

Sone, after the destruction,  
 Whan Troy was alle bete down  
 And slain was Priamus the king,  
 The Gregois, which of all this thing  
 Ben cause, tornen home ayein.  
 There may no man his hap withsain,  
 It hath ben sene and felt full ofte,  
 The harde time after the softe.  
 By see as they forth homeward went,  
 A rage of great tempest hem hent.  
 Juno let bende her partie bow,  
 The sky wax derke, the wind gan blow,  
 The firy welken gan to thonder,  
 As though the world shuld al asonder.  
 From heven out of the water gates  
 The reiny storm fell down algates,  
 And all her tacle made unwelde,  
 That no man might him self bewelde.  
 There may men here shipmen crie,  
 That stood in aunter for to die.  
 He that behinde sat to stere  
 May nought the fore stempne here,  
 The ship arose ayein the wawes,  
 The lodesman hath lost his lawes,



The see bet in on every side,  
 They nisten what fortune abide,  
 But setten hem all in goddes will,  
 Where he wolde hem save or spill.  
 And it fell thilke time thus,  
 There was a kinge, which Nanplus  
 Was hote, and he a sone hadde  
 At Troie, which the Gregois ladde  
 As he, that was made prince of alle,  
 Till that fortune let him falle.  
 His name was Palamides,  
 But through an hate netheles  
 Of som of hem his deth was caste  
 And he by treson overcaste.  
 His fader, whan he herde it telle,  
 He swore, if ever his time felle,  
 He wolde him venge if that he might,  
 And therto his avow he hight.  
 And thus this king through prive hate  
 Abode upon a waite algate,  
 For he was nought of fuche emprise,  
 To vengen him in open wise.

The fame, which goth wide where,  
 Maketh knowe, how that the Gregois were  
 Homward with al the felaship  
 Fro Troy upon the see by ship.  
 Nanplus, whan he this understood  
 And knew the tides of the flood  
 And sigh the wind blow to the londe,  
 A great deceipt anone he fonde

batur. Et sic, quod  
 Nanplus viribus ne-  
 quit, odio latitante  
 per dissimulacionis  
 fraudem vendicavit.



Of prive hate, as thou shalte here,  
Wherof I telle all this matere.

This king the weder gan beholde  
And wiste well, they moten holde  
Her cours endlonge his marche right,  
And made upon the derke night  
Of grete shides and of blockes  
Great fire ayeine the great rockes,  
To shew upon the hilles high,  
So that the flete of Grece it figh.  
And so it fell right as he thought,  
This flete, which an haven sought,  
The brighte fires fighe a fer,  
And they ben drawen ner and ner  
And wende well and understood,  
How all that fire was made for good  
To shewe where men shulde arrive.  
And thiderward they hasten blive.  
In semblaunt as men fain is guile.  
And that was proved thilke while.  
The ship, which wend his helpe accroche,  
Drof all to pieces on the roche.  
And so there deden ten or twelve  
There no man mighte helpe him selve,  
For there they wenden deth escape  
Withouten helpe her deth was shape.  
Thus they that comen first to-fore  
Upon the rockes ben forlore.  
But through the noise and through the cry  
The other weren ware therby,

And whan the day began to rowe,  
Tho mighten they the sothe knowe,  
That where they wenden frendes finde,  
They fonde frendship all behinde.  
The londe than was sone weived,  
Where that they hadden be deceived,  
And toke hem to the highe see,  
Therto they faiden alle ye,  
Fro that day forthe and ware they were  
Of that they had assaied there.

My sone, wherof thou might avise,  
How fraude stant in many wise  
Among hem, that guile thinke.  
There is no scrivener with his inke,  
Whiche half the fraude write can,  
That stant in suche a maner man.  
Forthy the wise men ne demen  
The thinges after that they semen,  
But after that they knowe and finde.  
The mirrour sheweth in his kinde,  
As he had all the world withinne  
And is in soth nothing therinne.  
And so fareth hate for a throwe,  
Till he a man hath overthrowe,  
Shall no man knowe by his chere,  
Whiche is avaunt, ne whiche arere.  
Forthy my sone, thenke on this.

Confessor.

My fader, so I woll iwis,  
And if there more of wrathe be,  
Nowe axeth forth pour charite,

Amans.

As ye by your bokes knowe,  
And I the sothe shall beknowe.

4. *Qui cobibere manum nequit et sic spem eius  
Naribus hic populo sepe timendus erit.  
Sepius in luctum Venus et sua gaudia transfert,  
Cumque suis thalamis talis amicus adest.  
Est amor amplexu non iectibus alliciendus,  
Frangit amicitias impetuosa manus.*

Hic tractat confessor super quarta et quinta specie ire, que impetuositas et homicidium dicuntur. Sed primo de impetuositate specialiter tractare intendit, cuius natura spiritum in naribus gestando ad omnes ire mociones in vindictam parata paciencia nullatenus observat.

My sone, thou shalt understonde,  
That yet towarde wrathe stonde  
Of dedly vices other two.  
And for to telle her names so  
It is contek and homicide,  
That ben to drede on every side.  
Contek so as the bokes sain  
Foolhast hath to his chamberlain,  
By whose counseil all unavised  
Is pacience most despised,  
Till homicide with him mete.  
Fro mercy they ben all unmete  
And thus ben they the worst of alle  
Of hem, whiche unto wrathe falle  
In dede both and eke in thought.  
For they accompte her wrath at nought,  
But if there be sheding of blood.  
And thus liche to a beste wode  
They knowen nought the god of life,  
Be so they have swerde or knife  
Her dedly wrathe for to wreke,  
Of pite list hem nought to speke.  
None other reson they ne fonge,  
But that they ben of mightes stronge.



But ware hem well in other place,  
Where every man behoveth grace.  
But there I trowe it shall him faile,  
To whom no mercy might availe,  
But wroughten upon tirannie,  
That no pite ne might hem plie.  
Now tell, my sone. My fader, what?  
If thou hast be coupable of that?

Opponit confessor.

My fader, nay, Crist me forbede,  
I speke onliche of the dede,  
Of which I was never coupable  
Without cause resonable.

Confessio amantis.

But this is nought to my matere  
Of shrifte, why we sitten here.  
For we ben set to shrive of love,  
As we beganne first above.  
And netheles I am beknowe,  
That as touchend of loves throwe,  
Whan I my wittes overwende,  
Min hertes kontek hath none ende,  
But ever stant upon debate  
To great disese of min estate,  
As for the time that it lasteth.  
For whan my fortune overcasteth  
Her whele and is to me so straunge  
And that I se, she woll nought chaunge,  
Than cast I all the worlde about  
And thenk, howe I at home in dout  
Have all my time in vein despended  
And se nought how to be amended,

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But rather for to be empeired,  
As he that is well nigh despeired.  
For I ne may no thank deserve,  
And ever I love and ever I serve  
And ever I am a liche nere,  
Thus, for I stonde in fuche a were,  
I am as who saith out of herre.  
And thus upon my self I werre,  
I bringe and put out alle pees,  
That I full ofte in such a rees  
Am wery of min owne life,  
So that of contek and of strife  
I am beknowe and have answerde,  
As ye, my fader, now have herde.  
Min herte is wonderly begone  
With counseil, wherof wit is one,  
Whiche hath reson in compaignie  
Ayein the whiche stant partie  
Will, which hath hope of his accorde.  
And thus they bringen up discorde,  
Witte and reson counseilen ofte,  
That I min herte shulde softe  
And that I shulde will remue  
And put him out of retenue  
Or elles holde him under fote.  
For as they sain, if that he mote,  
His owne reule have upon honde,  
There shall no wit ben understonde  
Of hope, also they tellen this,  
That over all where that he is

He set the herte in jeopartie  
 With wisshing and with fantasie,  
 And is nought trewe of that he saith,  
 So that there is on him no feith.  
 Thus with reson and witte avised  
 Is will and hope all day despised.  
 Reson saith, that I shulde leve  
 To love, where there is no leve  
 To spede, and will saith there ayein,  
 That such an herte is to vilain,  
 Which dare nought love, till that he spede.  
 Let hope serve at suche nede.  
 He saith eke, where an herte fit  
 All hole governed upon wit,  
 He hath this lives lust forlore.  
 And thus min herte is all to-tore  
 Of suche a kontek, as they make.  
 But yet I may nought will forsake,  
 That he nis maister of my thought,  
 Or that I spede, or spede nought.

Thou dost, my sone, ayeinst the right, Confessor.  
 But love is of so great a might,  
 His lawe may no man refuse,  
 So might thou there the better excuse.  
 And netheles thou shalt be lerned,  
 That will shulde be governed  
 Of reson more than of kinde,  
 Wherof a tale write I finde.

A philosophre of which men tolde  
 There was whilom by daies olde,

Hic ponit confessor  
 exemplum, quod  
 omnis impetuosa



voluntas sit discre-  
cionis moderamine  
gubernanda. Et  
narrat, qualiter Di-  
ogenes, qui motus  
animi sui rationi  
subjugaverat, re-  
gem Alexandrum  
super isto facto sibi  
opponente plenius  
informavit.

And Diogenes than he hight.  
So olde he was, that he ne might  
The world travaile, and for the best  
He shope him for to take his rest  
And dwelle at home in suche a wise,  
That nigh his house he let devise  
Endlonge upon an axel tree  
To set a tonne in suche degree,  
That he it mighte torne aboute,  
Wherof one heed was taken oute,  
For he therinne sitte shulde  
And torne him selve as he wolde  
And take the eire and se the heven  
And deme of the planetes seven  
As he, which couthe mochel what.  
And thus full ofte there he sat  
To muse in his philosophie  
Sole withouten compaignie,  
So that upon a morwe tide  
A thing, which shulde tho betide,  
Whan he was sette, here as him list  
To loke upon the sonne arist,  
Wherof the propertie he sigh,  
It felle, there cam ridend nigh  
King Alisaundre with a route.  
And as he cast his eye aboute  
He sigh this tonne, and what it ment  
He wolde wite, and thider sent  
A knight, by whom he might it knowe.  
And he him self that ilke throwe

Abode and hoveth there stille.  
This knight after the kinges wille  
With spore made his horse to gone  
And to the tonne he cam anone,  
Where that he fonde a man of age,  
And he him tolde the message,  
Suche as the kinge him had bede,  
And axeth why in thilke stede  
The tonne stood and what it was.  
And he, which understood the cas,  
Sat still and spake no worde ayein.  
The knight bad speke and faith: Vilain,  
Thou shalt me telle, er that I go,  
It is thy king, whiche axeth so.  
My king, quod he, that were unright.  
What is he thanne? faith the knight,  
Is he thy man? That say I nought,  
Quod he, but this I am bethought,  
My mannes man how that he is.  
Thou liest, false cherle, iwis,  
The knight him said and was right wroth,  
And to the kinge ayein he goth  
And told him, how this man answerde.  
The king, whan he this tale herde,  
Bad that they shulden all abide,  
For he him self wold thider ride.  
And whan he came to-fore the tonne,  
He hath his tale thus begonne:  
Al heil, he faith, what man art thou?  
Quod he: Such one as thou seest now.

The king, which hadde wordes wise,  
His age wolde nought despise  
But faith: My fader, I the pray,  
That thou me wolt the cause say,  
How that I am thy mannes man?  
Sire king, quod he, and that I can,  
If thou wilt. Yes, faith the king.  
Quod he: This is the soth thing  
Sith I first reson understood  
And knew what thing was evil and good,  
The will, whiche of my body moveth,  
Whos werkes that the god reproveth,  
I have restreigned evermore  
Of him, which stant under the lore  
Of reson, whos subject he is,  
So that he may nought done amis.  
And thus by wey of covenant  
Will is my man and my servaunt  
And ever hath be and ever shall.  
And thy will is thy principal  
And hath the lordship of thy wit,  
So that thou coutheft never yit  
Take a day rest of thy labour.  
But for to be a conquerour  
Of worldes good, which may nought laste,  
Thou hieft ever a liche faste,  
Where thou no reson hast to winne.  
And thus thy will is cause of sinne  
And is thy lord to whom thou serveft,  
Wherof thou litel thank deserveft.



The king, of that he thus answerd,  
Was nothing wroth, but when he herd  
The highe wisedom, whiche he saide,  
With goodly wordes this he praide,  
That he him wolde tell his name.  
I am, quod he, that ilke same,  
Which men Diogenes calle.  
Tho was the king right glad with alle,  
For he had herd ofte to-fore  
What man he was, so that therfore  
He saide: O wise Diogene,  
Now shall thy grete wit be sene,  
For thou shalt of my yifte have,  
What worldes thinge thou wolt crave.  
Quod he: Than hove out of my sonne  
And lete it shine into my tonne,  
For thou benimst me thilke yifte,  
Which lith nought in thy might to shifte,  
None other good of the me nedeth.

The king, whom every contre dredeth,  
Lo, thus he was enformed there,  
Wherof, my sone, thou might lere,  
How that thy wil shal nought be leved,  
Where it is nought of wit releved.  
And thou hast said thy self er this,  
How that thy wil thy maister is,  
Through which thin hertes thought with-  
Is ever of kontek to beginne, [inne  
So that it is greatly to drede,  
That it no homicide brede.

For love is of a wonder kinde  
 And hath his wittes ofte blinde,  
 That they fro mannes reson falle.  
 But whan that it is so befallē,  
 That will shall his corage lede  
 In loves cause, it is to drede,  
 Wherof I finde ensample write,  
 Whiche is behovely for to wite.

Hic in amoris causa  
 ponit confessor exem-  
 plum contra illos, qui  
 in sua dampna nimis  
 accelerantes ex impe-  
 tuositate se ipsos mul-  
 tociens offendunt. Et  
 narrat, qualiter Pira-  
 mus cum ipse Tisbe  
 amicam suam in loco  
 inter eosdem deputato  
 tempore adventus sui  
 promptam non inve-  
 nit, animo impetuoso  
 se ipsum pre dolore  
 extracto gladio mor-  
 taliter transfodit, que  
 postea infra breve ve-  
 niens cum ipsum sic  
 mortuum invenisset,  
 etiam et illa in sue  
 ipsius mortem impe-  
 tuose festinans eius-  
 dem gladii cuspidē  
 sui cordis intima per  
 medium penetravit.

I rede a tale, and telleth this,  
 The citee, which Semiramis  
 Enclosed hath with walle about  
 Of worthy folk with many a rout  
 Was inhabited here and there.  
 Amonge the which two there were  
 Aboven all other noble and great,  
 Dwellend tho within a strete  
 So nigh to-gider, as it was sene,  
 That there was nothing hem betwene  
 But wowe to wowe and walle to walle.  
 This o lord hath in specialle  
 A sone, a lusty bacheler,  
 In all the towne was none his pere.  
 That other had a doughter eke  
 In all the lond that for to seke  
 Men wisten none so faire as she.  
 And fell so, as it shulde be,  
 This faire doughter nigh this sone,  
 As they to-gider thanne wone,  
 Cupid hath so the thinges shape,  
 That they ne might his honds escape,

That he his fire on hem ne caste,  
Wherof her herts he overcaste  
To folwe thilke lore and sue,  
Which never man yet might escheue.  
And that was love, as it is happed,  
Whiche hath her hertes so betrapped,  
That they by alle waies seche,  
How that they mighten winne a speche  
Her wofull peine for to lesse.  
Who loveth wel, it may nought misse.  
And namely whan there ben two  
Of one accord, how so it go,  
But if that they some waie finde,  
For love is ever of fuche a kinde  
And hath his folk so wel affaited,  
That how so that it be awaited,  
There may no man the purpos let.  
And thus betwene hem two they set  
An hole upon a wal to make,  
Through which they have her counseil take  
At alle times, whan they might.  
This faire maiden Tisbe hight  
And he, whom she loved hote,  
Was Piramus by name hote.  
So longe her lesson they recorden,  
Til ate laste they accorden  
By nightes time for to wende  
Alone out fro the townes ende,  
Where was a welle under a tree,  
And who cam first or she or he



He shulde stille there abide.  
So it befell the nightes tide  
This maiden, which desguised was,  
All prively the softe pas  
Goth through the large town unknowe,  
Till that she cam within a throwe,  
Where that she liked for to dwelle  
At thilke unhappy freshe welle,  
Which was also the forest nigh,  
Where she comend a leon figh  
Into the feld to take his pray  
In haste. And she tho fledde away,  
So as fortune shulde falle,  
For fere and let her wimpel falle  
Nigh to the wel upon therbage.  
This wilde leon in his rage  
A beste, whiche he found there out,  
Hath slain and with his bloody snout,  
Whan he hath eten what he wolde,  
To drinke of thilke stremes colde  
Come unto the welle, where he fonde  
The wimpel, whiche out of her honde  
Was falle, and he it hath to-drawe,  
Bebledde aboute and all forgnawe.  
And than he straught him for to drinke  
Upon the freshe welles brinke,  
And after that out of the plein  
He torneth to the wode ayein.  
And Tisbe durste nought remewe,  
But as a brid, which were in mewe,

Within a bussh she kept her close  
So stille that she nought arose  
Unto her self and pleigneth ay.  
And fell, while that she there lay,  
This Piramus cam after sone  
Unto the welle and by the mone  
He found her wimpel bloody there.  
Cam never yet to mannes ere  
Tidinge ne to mannes fight  
Merveille, which so fore aflight  
A mannes herte, as it tho dede  
To him, whiche in the same stede  
With many a woful compleigninge  
Began his hondes for to wringe  
As he, which demeth fikerly,  
That she be dede. And sodeinly  
His swerd all naked out he braide  
In his fool haste and thus he saide :  
I am cause of this felonie,  
So it is reson, that I deie,  
And she is dede by cause of me.  
And with that worde upon his kne  
He fell, and to the goddes alle  
Up to the heven he gan to calle  
And praide sithen it was so,  
That he may nought his love as tho  
Have in this world, that of her grace  
He might her have in other place,  
For here wolde he nought abide,  
He saith. But as it shall betide,

The pomel of his swerd to ground  
 He set and through his hert a wound  
 He made up to the bare hilde  
 And in this wise him self spilde  
 With his foolhafte and deth he nam.  
 For she within a while cam,  
 Where he lay dede upon his knife,  
 So woful yet was never life  
 As Tisbe was. Whan she him sigh,  
 She mighte nought one worde on high  
 Speke out, for her herte shette,  
 That of her life no pris she sette,  
 But dede swounend down she felle,  
 Till after whan it so befelle,  
 That she out of her traunce awoke,  
 With many a wofull pitous loke  
 Her eye alwey among she caste  
 Upon her love and ate laste  
 She caught breth and saide thus :

O thou, which cleped art Venus,  
 Goddesse of love, and thou Cupide,  
 Which loves cause hast for to guide,  
 I wot now wel, that ye be blinde  
 Of thilke unhap, whiche I now finde  
 Only betwene my love and me.  
 This Piramus, whiche here I se  
 Bledend, what hath he deserved ?  
 For he your hest hath kept and served,  
 And was yonge and I both also,  
 Alas, why do ye with us so ?



Ye set our hertes both on fire  
And made us suche thing desire,  
Wherof that we no skille couthe.  
But thus our freshe lusty youthe  
Withouten joy is all despended,  
Which thing may never ben amended.  
For as for me this woll I say,  
That me is lever for to deie  
Than live after this forwefull day.  
And with this word where as he lay  
Her love in armes she embraseth  
Her owne deth and so purchaseth,  
That now she wepte and now she kiste,  
Till ate laste, er she it wiste,  
So great a forwe is to her falle,  
Whiche overgoth her wittes alle,  
And she, which mighte nought asterte,  
The swerdes pointe ayein her herte  
She set and fell down therupon,  
Wherof that she was dede anone.  
And thus both on a swerd bledend  
They were found dede liggend.

Now thou, my sone, hast herd this tale      Confessor.  
Beware that of thin owne bale  
Thou be nought cause in thy foolhaste,  
And kepe that thou thy wit ne waste  
Upon thy thought in aventure,  
Wherof thy lives forfeiture  
May falle. And if thou have so thought  
Er this, tell on and hide it nought.

Amans.

My fader, upon loves fide  
 My conscience I wol nought hide,  
 How that for love of pure wo  
 I have ben ofte moved so,  
 That with my wisshes if I might  
 A thousand times, I you plight,  
 I hadde storven in a day.  
 And therof I me thrive may,  
 Though love fully me ne slough,  
 My will to deie was inough.  
 So am I of my will coupable  
 And yet is she nought merciabile,  
 Which may me yive life and hele,  
 But that her list nought with me dele,  
 I wot by whos counseil it is  
 And him wolde I long time er this,  
 And yet I wolde and ever shall,  
 Sleen and destruye in speciall.  
 The golde of nine kinges londes  
 Ne shulde him save fro min hondes,  
 In my power if that he were.  
 But yet him stant of me no fere,  
 For nought that ever I can manace,  
 He is the hinderer of my grace,  
 Til he be dede I may nought spede.  
 So mote I nedes taken hede  
 And shape, how that he were away,  
 If I therto may finde a wey.

Confessor.

My sone, tell me now forthy,  
 Whiche is that mortal enemy,

That thou manaceſt to be dede.

My fader, it is ſuche a quede,  
That where I come, he is to-fore  
And doth ſo, that my cauſe is lore.

Amans.

What is his name? It is daunger,  
Whiche is my ladies counſeiler.

Confefſor.  
Amans.

For I was never yet ſo fligh  
To come in any place nigh,  
Where as ſhe was by night or day,  
That daunger ne was redy ay,  
With whom for ſpeche ne for mede  
Yet might I never of love ſpede.  
For ever this finde I ſoth,  
All that my lady faith or doth  
To me daunger ſhall make an ende.  
And that maketh al my world miſwende,  
And ever I axe his helpe, but he  
May be wel cleped fauns pite.  
For ay the more I to him bowe,  
The laſſe he woll my tale allowe.  
He hath my lady ſo engleued,  
She woll nought, that he be remeued.  
For ever he hongeth on her ſaile  
And is ſo prive of counſeile,  
That ever whan I have ought bede,  
I finde daunger in her ſtede  
And min anſwere of him I have.  
But for no mercy, that I crave,  
Of mercy never a point I hadde.  
I find his anſwer ay ſo badde,



That worfe might it never be.  
And thus betwen daunger and me  
Is ever werre til he deie.  
But might I ben of fuch maiftrie,  
That I daunger had overcome,  
With that were all my joie come.  
Thus wolde I wonde for no finne  
Ne yet for all this world to winne,  
If that I might finde a sleight  
To lay all min eftate in weight,  
I wolde him fro the court defever,  
So that he come ayeinward never,  
Therfore I wifhe and wolde fain,  
That he were in fome wife flain.  
For while he ftant in thilke place  
Ne gete I nought my ladies grace.  
Thus hate I dedely thilke vice  
And wolde he ftood in none office  
In place, where my lady is.  
For if he do, I wot wel this,  
That outhen he fhall deie or I  
Within a while, and nought forthy  
On my lady full ofte I mufe,  
Now that fhe may her felf excufe.  
For if that I deie in fuche a plite  
Me thenketh fhe might nought be quite,  
That fhe ne were an homicide.  
And if it fhulde fo betide,  
As god forbede it fhulde be,  
By double way it is pite.

For I, which all my will and wit  
Have yove and served ever yit,  
And than I shuld in suche a wise  
In rewarding of my service  
Be dede, me thenketh it were routh.  
And furthermore I telle trouth,  
She that hath ever be wel named,  
She were worthy than to be blamed  
And of reson to ben appeled,  
Whan with o word she might have heled  
A man, and suffreth him to deie.  
Ha, who sigh ever such a way?  
Ha, who sigh ever such destresse?  
Withoute pite gentileffe,  
Withoute mercy womanhede,  
That woll so quite a man his mede,  
Whiche ever hath be to love trewe.

My gode fader, if ye rewe  
Upon my tale, tell me now,  
And I wol stinte and herken you.

My sone, attempre thy corage  
Fro wrath and let thin hert assuage,  
For who so wol him underfonge,  
He may his grace abide longe,  
Or he of love be received  
And eke also, but it be weived,  
There mighte mochel thing befall,  
That shulde make a man to falle  
Fro love, that never afterwarde  
Ne durst he loke thiderwarde.

Confessor.

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In harde waies men gon softe,  
And er they climbe avise hem ofte,  
And men seen all day, that rape reweth.  
And who so wicked ale breweth,  
Full ofte he mot the worse drinke.  
Better it is to flete than finke,  
Better is upon the bridel chewe  
Than if he fel and overthrewe  
The hors and sticked in the mire.  
To cast water in the fire  
Better is than brenne up al the hous.  
The man whiche is malicious  
And foolhastif, full ofte he falleth.  
And selden is, whan love him calleth.  
Forthy better is to suffre a throwe  
Than to be wilde and overthrowe.  
Suffraunce hath ever be the best  
To wisshen him that secheth rest.  
And thus if thou wolt love spede,  
My sone, suffre, as I the rede.  
What may the mous ayein the cat?  
And for this cause I axe that,  
Who may to love make a werre,  
That he ne hath him self the werre?  
Love axeth pees and ever shall.  
And who that fighteth most withall,  
Shall lest conquere of his emprise.  
For this they tellen that ben wise,  
Whiche is to strive and have the werse  
To hasten, is nought worth a kerse.



Thinge that a man may nought acheve,  
That may nought wel be done at eve,  
It mot abide till the morwe.  
Ne haste nought thine owne forwe,  
My sone, and take this in thy witte,  
He hath nought lost that wel abitte.  
Ensamble, that it falleth thus,  
Thou might well take of Piramus,  
Whan he in haste his swerd out drough  
And on the point him selven flough  
For love of Tisbe pitously,  
For he her wimpel fond bloody  
And wende a beste her hadde slain,  
Where as him ought have be right fain,  
For she was there al sauf beside.  
But for he wolde nought abide,  
This mischef fell. Forthy beware,  
My sone, as I the warne dare,  
Do thou no thinge in fuche a rees,  
For suffraunce is the well of pees,  
Though thou to loves court pursue,  
Yet fit it wel, that thou escheue,  
That thou the court nought overhaste.  
For so thou might thy time waste,  
But if thin hap therto be shape,  
It may nought helpe for to rape.  
Therefore attempre thy corage,  
Foolhaste doth none avauntage,  
But ofte it set a man behinde  
In cause of love, and I finde

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By olde ensample as thou shalt here  
Touchend of love in this matere.

Hic ponit confessor  
exemplum contra il-  
los, qui in amoris cau-  
sa nimia festinatione  
concupiscentes tar-  
dius expediunt, et  
narrat, qualiter pro  
eo, quod Phebus  
quandam virginem  
pulcherrimam nomi-  
ne Daphnem nimia  
amoris acceleratione  
insequebatur, iratus  
Cupido cor Phebi sa-  
gitta aurea ignita ar-  
dencius vulneravit et  
econtra cor Daphne  
quadam sagitta plum-  
bea, que frigidissima  
fuit, sobrius perfora-  
vit, et sic quanto ma-  
gis Phebus ardencior  
in amore Daphnem  
persecutus est, tanto  
magis ipsa frigidior  
Phebi concupiscen-  
ciam toto corde fugi-  
tiva dedignabatur.

A maiden whilom there was one,  
Which Daphne hight, and such was none  
Of beaute than, as it was saide.  
Phebus his love hath on her laide,  
And therupon to her he sought  
In his foolhaste and so besought,  
That she with him no reste hadde,  
For ever upon her love he gradde,  
And she said ever unto him nay.  
So it befelle upon a day  
Cupide, whiche hath every chaunce  
Of love under his governaunce,  
Sigh Phebus hasten him so sore,  
And for he shulde him haste more  
And yet nought speden ate laste  
A dart throughout his hert he caste,  
Which was of golde and all a fire,  
That made him many fold desire  
Of love more than he dede.  
To Daphne eke in the same stede  
A dart of led he caste and smote,  
Which was all colde and no thing hote.  
And thus Phebus in love brenneth  
And in his haste aboute renneth  
To loke, if that he might winne.  
But he was ever to beginne,  
For ever away fro him she fled,  
So that he never his love sped.

And for to make him full beleve,  
That no foolhafte might acheve  
To gete love in fuch degre,  
This Daphne into a lorer tre  
Was torned, whiche is ever grene  
In token, as yet it may be fene,  
That ſhe ſhall dwelle a maiden ſtill  
And Phebus failen of his wille.  
By ſuche enfamples as they ſtonde,  
My ſone, thou might underſtonde  
To haſten love is thing in vein,  
Whan that fortune is there ayein,  
To take where a man hath leve  
Good is, and elles he mot leve.  
For whan a mannes happes failen,  
There is none haſte may availen.

My fader, graunt mercy of this.  
But while I ſe my lady is  
No tree, but holde her owne forme,  
There may me no man ſo enforme,  
To whether part fortune wende,  
That I unto my lives ende  
Ne wol her ſerve evermo.

Amans.

My ſone, ſithen it is ſo,  
I ſay no more, but in this cas  
Beware, howe it with Phebus was.  
Nought only upon loves chaunce,  
But upon every governaunce,  
Which falleth unto mannes dede,  
Foolhafte is ever for to drede,

Confellor.



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And that a man good counseil take,  
Er he his purpose undertake,  
For counseil put foolhafte away.

Amans,

Now gode fader, I you prey,  
That for to wisse me the more,  
Some good ensample upon this lore  
Ye wold me telle, of that is writ,  
That I the better mighte wit,  
Howe I foolhafte shulde escheue  
And the wisdome of counseil sue.

Confessor.

My sone, that thou might enforme  
Thy pacience upon the forme  
Of olde ensamples as they felle,  
Nowe understond, what I shall telle.

Hic ponit confessor  
exemplum contra il-  
los, qui nimio furore  
accensi vindictam ire  
sue ultra quam decet  
consequi affectant. Et  
narrat, qualiter Athe-  
mas et Demephon re-  
ges, cum ipsi a bello  
Trojano ad propria  
remeassent et a suis  
ibidem pacifice recep-  
ti non fuissent, con-  
gregato aliunde pug-  
natorum exercitu re-  
giones suas non solum  
incendio vastare sed  
et omnes in eisdem  
habitantes a minimo  
usque ad maiorem in  
perpetuam vindictæ  
memoriam gladio in-  
terficere fervore ira-  
cundie proposuerunt.  
Sed rex Nestor, qui  
senex et sapiens fuit,  
ex paciencia tractatus  
inter ipsos reges et

When noble Troie was belein  
And overcome, and home ayein  
The Gregois torned fro the siege,  
The kinges found her owne liege  
In many place, as men saide,  
That hem forsoke and disobeide.  
Among the whiche fell this case  
To Demephon and Athemas,  
That weren kinges bothe two  
And bothe weren served so,  
Her leges wolde hem nought receive,  
So that they mote algates weive  
To seche londe in other place.  
For there founde they no grace,  
Wherof they token hem to rede  
And foughten frendes ate nede,

And eche of hem assureth other  
To helpe as to his owne brother  
To vengen hem of thilke outrage  
And winne ayein her heritage.  
And thus they ride aboute faste  
To geten hem helpe, and ate laste  
They hadden power suffisaunt  
And maden than a covenaut,  
That they ne shulde no life save,  
Ne prest, ne clerk, ne lord, ne knave,  
Ne wife, ne childe of that they finde,  
Which berth visage of mannes kinde,  
So that no life shall be focoured,  
But with the dedely swerd devoured.  
In such foolhaste her ordinaunce  
They shapen for to do vengeaunce.  
Whan this purpose was wist and knowe  
Among here host, tho was there blowe  
Of wordes many a speche aboute.  
Of yonge men the lusty route  
Were of this tale glad inough.  
There was no care for the plough,  
As they that weren foolhastif  
They ben accorded to the strife  
And fain, it may nought ben to great  
To vengen hem of such forfet.  
Thus faith the wilde unwise tonge  
Of hem, that there weren yonge.

But Nestor, which was olde and hore,  
The salve sigh to-fore the fore

eorum regna inita  
pace et concordia hu-  
iusmodi impetuositatem  
micius pacificavit.

As he, that was of counseil wife.  
So that anone by his advise  
There was a prive counseil nome,  
The lordes ben to-gider come.

This Demephon and Athemas  
Her purpos tolden, as it was.  
They setten alle still and herde,  
Was non but Nestor hem answerde.  
He badde hem, if they wol winne,  
They shulden se, er they beginne,  
Her ende and set her first entent,  
That they hem after ne repent.  
And axeth hem this question,  
To what finall conclusion  
They wolde regne kinges there,  
If that no people in londe were?  
And faith, it were a wonder wierd  
To seen a king become an hierd,  
Where no life is but only beste  
Under the legeaunce of his heste.  
For who that is of man no kinge  
The remenaunt is as no thinge.  
He faith eke, if they pourpose holde  
To flee the people, as they two wolde,  
Whan they it mighte nought restore,  
All Grece it shulde abegge fore  
To se the wilde beste wone,  
Where whilom dwelt a mannes sone.  
And for that cause he bad hem trete  
And stint of tho manaces grete.



Better is to winne by faire speche,  
He saith, than such vengeaunce seche.  
For whan a man is most above,  
Him nedeth most to gete him love.

Whan Nestor hath this tale saide,  
Ayein him was no word withsaide.  
It thought hem all he saide wele.  
And thus fortune her dedly whele  
Fro werre torneth into pees.  
But forth they wenten netheles.  
And whan the contrees herde sain,  
How that her kinges be besein  
Of suche a power as they ladde,  
Was none so bold, that hem ne dradde  
And for to seche pees and grith  
They sende and praide anon forthwith,  
So that the kinges ben appefed  
And every mannes hert is esed.  
All was foryete and nought recorded,  
And thus they ben to-gider accorded.  
The kinges were ayein received,  
And pees was take and wrathe weived  
And all through counseil, which was good  
Of him that reson understood.

By this ensample, sone, attempre  
Thin hert and let no will distempre  
Thy wit and do no thing by might,  
Which may be do by love and right.  
Foolhaste is cause of mochel wo,  
Forthy my sone, do nought so.

Confessor.

And as touchend of homicide,  
 Which toucheth unto loves fide,  
 Ful ofte it falleth unavised  
 Through will, which is nought wel assised,  
 Whan wit and reson ben away  
 And that foolhafte is in the wey,  
 Wherof hath falle great vengeance.  
 Forthy take into remembrance  
 To love in suche a maner wise,  
 That thou deserve no iuse.  
 For well I wot, thou might nought lette,  
 That thou ne shalt thin herte sette  
 To love, where thou wolt or none.  
 But if thy wit be overgone,  
 So that it torne unto malice,  
 There wot no man of thilke vice,  
 What perill that there may befall.  
 Wherof a tale amonges alle  
 Whiche is great pite for to here  
 I thenke for to tellen here,  
 That thou such mordre might withstonde,  
 Whan thou the tale hast understonde.

Hic ponit confessor  
 exemplum contra il-  
 los, qui ob sue concu-  
 piscencie desiderium  
 homicide efficiuntur.  
 Et narrat, qualiter  
 Climestra uxor regis  
 Agamenontis, cum  
 ipse a bello Trojano  
 domi redisset, consilio  
 Egisti, quem adultera  
 peramavit, sponsum  
 suum in cubili dormi-  
 entem sub noctis fi-

Of Troie at thilke noble towne,  
 Whose fame stant yet of renowne  
 And ever shall to mannes ere,  
 The siege laste longe there,  
 Er that the Grekes it might winne,  
 While Priamus was king therinne.  
 But of the Grekes, that lien aboute,  
 Agamenon lad all the route.

This thinge is knowen overall,  
 But yet I thenke in speciall  
 To my matere therupon  
 Telle in what wise Agamenon  
 Through chaunce, which may nought be  
 Of love untrewē was deceived. [weived,  
 An olde sawe is: who that is sligh  
 In place were he may be nigh  
 He maketh the ferre leve loth  
 Of love, and thus ful ofte it goth.  
 There while Agamenon batailleth  
 To winne Troie and it assaileth  
 From home and was long time fer,  
 Egistus drough his quene ner  
 And with the leiser, whiche he hadde,  
 This lady at his will he ladde.  
 Climestre was her righte name,  
 She was therof greatly to blame  
 To love there it may nought laste,  
 But fell to mischefe ate laste.  
 For whan this noble worthy knight  
 Fro Troie came the firste night,  
 That he at home a bedde lay  
 Egistus longe er it was day,  
 As this Climestre him had assent,  
 And weren bothe of one assent,  
 By trefon slough him in his bed.  
 But morder, which may nought ben hed,  
 Sprong out to every mannes ere,  
 Wherof the lond was full of fere.

lencio trucidabat, cui-  
 us mortem filius eius  
 Horestes tunc junioris  
 etatis postea diis ad-  
 monitus crudelissima  
 severitate vindicavit.



Agamenon hath by this quene  
 A sone, and that was after sene.  
 But yet as than he was of youth,  
 A babe, which no reson couth.  
 And as god wolde, it felle him thus,  
 A worthy knight Taltibius  
 This yonge childe hath in keping.  
 And whan he herde of this tiding,  
 Of this treson, of this misdede,  
 He gan within him self to drede  
 In aunter if this false Egiste  
 Upon him come er he it wiste  
 To take and morthor of his malice  
 This child, whiche he hath to norice,  
 And for that cause in alle haste  
 Out of the londe he gan him haste  
 And to the kinge of Crete he straught  
 And him this yonge lorde betaught  
 And praid him for his faders sake,  
 That he this child wolde undertake  
 And kepe him till he be of age,  
 So as he was of his lignage,  
 And told him over all the cas,  
 How that his fader morthred was,  
 And how Egistus, as men saide,  
 Was king, to whom the londe obeide.

And whan Ydomeneus the kinge  
 Hath understanding of this thinge,  
 Which that this knight him hadde told,  
 He made forwe manyfold

And toke the childe unto his warde  
And faide he wolde him kepe and warde,  
Till that he were of such a might  
To handle a fwerde and ben a knight  
To vengen him at his owne will.  
And thus Horestes dwelleth still.  
Such was the childes righte name,  
Whiche after wroughte mochel shame  
In vengeaunce of his faders deth.  
The time of yeres overgeth,  
That he was man of brede and lengthe,  
Of wit, of manhode and of strengthe,  
A fair persone amonges alle.  
And he began to clepe and calle  
As he, which come was to man,  
Unto the kinge of Crete than  
Praiende, that he wold him make  
A knight and power with him take,  
For lenger wolde he nought beleve,  
He saith, but praith the kinge of leve  
To gone and claim his heritage  
And vengen him of thilke outrage,  
Which was unto his fader do.  
The kinge assenteth well therto  
With great honour and knight him maketh  
And great power to him betaketh.  
And gan his journe for to caste,  
So that Horestes ate laste  
His leve toke and forth he goth  
As he, that was in his hert wroth.

His firste pleinte to bemene  
Unto the citee of Athene  
He goth him forth and was received,  
So there was he nought deceived.  
The duke and tho that weren wise  
They profren hem to his service,  
And he hem thonketh of her proffer  
And faith him self he wol gone offer  
Unto the goddes for his spede,  
And alle men him yive rede.  
So goth he to the temple forth,  
Of yiftes, that be mochel worth,  
His sacrifice and his offringe  
He made. And after his axinge  
He was answerde, if that he wolde  
His state recover, than he sholde  
Upon his moder do vengeaunce  
So cruel, that the remembraunce  
Therof might evermore abide,  
As she, that was an homicide  
And of her owne lord mordrice.  
Horestes, whiche of thilke office  
Was nothing glad, as than he praide  
Unto the goddes there and faide,  
That they the jugement devise,  
How she shall take the juise.  
And therupon he had answere,  
That he her pappes shulde of-tere  
Out of her breast his owne hondes  
And for ensample of alle londes



With hors she shulde be to-drawe,  
Till houndes had her bones gnawe  
Withouten any sepulture.  
This was a wofull aventure.

And whan Horestes hath all herde,  
How that the goddes have answerde,  
Forth with the strengthe, whiche he lad,  
The duke and his power he had  
And to a citee forth they gone,  
The which was cleped Cropheone,  
Where as Phoicus was lord and fire,  
Which profreth him withouten hire  
His helpe and all that he may do  
As he, that was right glad therto  
To greve his mortal enemy  
And tolde him certain cause why,  
How that Egiste in mariage  
His doughter whilom of full age  
Forlay and afterward forsoke,  
Whan he Horestes moder toke.  
Men sain : olde sin newe shame.  
Thus more and more arose the blame  
Ayein Egiste on every side.

Horestes with his host to ride  
Began, and Phoicus with him wente,  
I trowe Egist him shall repente.  
They riden forth unto Micene,  
There lay Climestre thilke quene,  
The whiche Horestes moder is.  
And whan she herde telle of this,

The gates were faste shette,  
 And they were of her entre lette.  
 Anone this citee was withoute  
 Belain and sieged all aboute,  
 And ever among they it assaile  
 Fro day to night and so travaile,  
 Till ate laste they it wonne,  
 Tho was there sorwe inough begonne.

Horestes did his moder calle  
 Anone to-fore the lordes alle  
 And eke to-fore the people also,  
 To her and tolde his tale tho  
 And saide : O cruel beste unkinde,  
 How mightest thou thin herte finde  
 For any luste of loves draught,  
 That thou accordedst to the slaught  
 Of him, which was thin owne lorde ?  
 Thy treson stant of such recorde,  
 Thou might thy werkes nought forsake,  
 So mote I for my faders sake  
 Vengeaunce upon thy body do,  
 As I commaunded am therto.  
 Unkindely for thou hast wrought,  
 Unkindelich it shall be bought,  
 The sone shall the moder flee,  
 For that whilom thou saidest ye  
 To that thou shuldest nay have said.  
 And he with that his honds hath laid  
 Upon his moder breast anone  
 And rent out from the bare bone

Her pappes both and caste away  
Amiddes in the carte way  
And after toke the dede cors  
And lete it be drawe away with hors  
Unto the hounde, unto the raven,  
She was none other wife graven.

Egistus, which was elles where,  
Tidinges comen to his ere,  
How that Micene was belain,  
But what was more herd he nought sain.  
With great manace and mochel bofte  
He drough power and made an hoste  
And came in the rescouffe of the town.  
But all the sleight of his trefon  
Horestes wist it by a spie  
And of his men a great partie  
He made in busshement abide  
To waite on him in fuche a tide,  
That he ne might her hond escape.  
And in this wise, as he hath shape,  
The thing befell, so that Egist  
Was take, er he him selfe it wist,  
And was forth brought his hondes bonde,  
As whan men have a traitor fonde.  
And tho that weren with him take,  
Whiche of trefon were overtake,  
To-gider in one sentence falle.  
But false Egiste above hem alle  
Was demed to diverse peine,  
The worste that men couthe ordeigne,



And so forth after by the lawe  
He was unto the gibet drawe,  
Where he above all other hongeth,  
As to a traitor it belongeth.  
The fame with her swifte winges  
Aboute fligh and bare tidinges  
And made it couth in alle londes,  
How that Horestes with his hondes  
Climestre his owne moder slough.  
Some sain, he dide well inough,  
And some sain, he did amis.  
Divers opinion there is,  
That she is dede they speken alle,  
But plainly howe it is befall  
The matere is so litel throwe  
In sothe there might no man knowe,  
But they that weren at the dede.  
And comunlich in every nede  
The worste speche is rathest herde  
And leved, till it be answerde.  
The kinges and the lordes great  
Begonne Horestes for to threat  
To putten him out of his regne,  
He is nought worthy for to regne,  
The child, which slough his moder so,  
They said, and therupon also  
The lordes of comun assent  
The time sette of parlement,  
And to Athenes king and lorde  
To-gider come of one accorde,

To knowe how that the sothe was,  
So that Horestes in this cas  
They senden after, and he come.

King Menelay the wordes nome  
And axeth him of this matere.  
And he, that all it mighten here,  
Answerde and tolde his tale at large,  
And how the goddes in his charge  
Commaunded him in suche a wise  
His owne hond to do iuise.  
And with this tale a duke arose,  
Which was a worthy knight of lose,  
His name was Menesteus,  
And saide unto the lordes thus :  
The wreche, whiche Horestes dede,  
It was thinge of the goddes bede,  
And nothinge of his cruelte.  
And if there were of my degre  
In all this place suche a knight,  
That wolde saine, it was no right,  
I woll it with my body prove.  
And therupon he cast his glove  
And eke this noble duke alleide  
Full many an other skill and saide,  
She hadde well deserved wreche,  
First for the cause of spouse breche,  
And after wrought in suche a wise,  
That all the worlde it ought agrise,  
Whan that she for so foul a vice  
Was of her owne lord mordrice.

They fitten alle still and herde,  
But therto was no man answerde,  
It thought hem all, he saide skille,  
There is no man withsay it wille.  
Whan they upon the reson musen,  
Horestes alle they excusen,  
So that with great solempnite  
He was unto his dignite  
Received and corouned kinge.  
And tho befell a wonder thinge.  
Egiona whan she it wiste,  
Which was the doughter of Egiste  
And suster on the moder side  
To this Horest, at thilke tide,  
Whan she herde how her brother sped,  
For pure sorwe, whiche her led,  
That he ne hadde ben exiled,  
She hath her owne life beguiled  
Anone and henge her self tho.  
It hath and shall ben evermo  
To mordre who that woll assente  
He may nought faile to repente.  
This false Egiona was one,  
Which to mordre Agamenon  
Yaf her accorde and her assent,  
So that by goddes jugement,  
Though none other man it wolde,  
She toke her juisse as she sholde,  
And as she to an other wrought  
Vengeance upon her self she sought



And hath of her unhappy wit  
A modre with a modre quit.  
Suche is of modre the vengeaunce.

Forthy my sone, in remembraunce  
Of this ensample take good hede.  
For who that thenketh his love spede  
With mordre, he shall with worldes shame  
Him self and eke his love shame.

Confessor.

My fader, of this aventure,  
Whiche ye have tolde, I you assure  
My herte is sory for to here,  
But onely for I wolde lere  
What is to done, and what to leve,  
And over this now by your leve.  
That ye me wolde telle I pray,  
If there be leful any way  
Withoute sinne a man may flee.

Amans.

Hic queritur, qui-  
bus de causis licet  
hominem occidere.

My sone, in sondry wise ye.  
What man that is of traiterie  
Of mordre or elles robberie  
Atteint, the juge shal not let,  
But he shal seen of pure det  
And doth great sinne, if that he wonde.  
For who, that lawe hath upon honde,  
And spareth for to do justice  
For mercy, doth nought his office,  
That he his mercy so bewareth,  
Whan for o shrewe, whiche he spareth,  
A thousand gode men he greveth.  
With such mercy who that beleveth

Confessor.

Seneca. *Judex, qui  
parcit ulcisci, mul-  
tos improbos facit.*

To please god, he is deceived  
Or elles reson mot be weived.

Apostolus. *Non  
sine causa judex  
gladium portat.*

The lawe stode or we were bore,  
How that a kinges swerde is bore  
In signe, that he shall defende  
His true people and make an ende  
Of suche, as wolden hem deuoure.

Confessor.

Lo, thus my sone, to succour  
The lawe and comun right to winne  
A man may flee withoute sinne  
And do therof a great almesse  
So for to kepe rightwisnesse.  
And over this for his contree  
In time of werre a man is free  
Him self, his house and eke his londe  
Defende with his owne honde  
And flee, if that he may no bet  
After the lawe, whiche is set.

Amans.

Now fader, than I you beseeche  
Of hem, that dedly werres seche  
In worldes cause and sheden blood,  
If suche an homicide is good?

Confessor.

My sone, upon thy question  
The trouth of min opinion,  
Als ferforth as my wit arecheth  
And as the pleine lawe techeth,  
I wol the telle in evidence  
To reule with thy conscience.

5. *Quod creat ipse deus, necat hoc homicida creatum,  
Ultor et humano sanguine spargit humum.*

*Ut pecoris sic est hominis cruor heu modo fusus,  
 Viſta jacet pietas, et furor urget opus.  
 Angelus in terra pax dixit, et ultima Chriſti  
 Verba ſonant pacem, quam modo guerra fugat.*

The highe god of his juſtice  
 That ilke foul horrible vice  
 Of homicide he hath forbede  
 By Moïſes, as it was bede.  
 Whan goddes ſone alſo was bore,  
 He ſent his aungel down therfore,  
 Whom the ſhepherdes herden ſinge :  
 Pees to the men of welwillinge  
 In erthe be amonge us here.  
 So for to ſpeke in this matere  
 After the lawe of charite,  
 There ſhall no dedly werre be.  
 And eke nature it hath defended  
 And in her lawe pees commended,  
 Whiche is the cheſe of mannes welth,  
 Of mannes life, of mannes helth.  
 But dedly werre hath his covine  
 Of peſtilence and of famine,  
 Of pouerte and of alle wo,  
 Wherof this world we blamen ſo,  
 Which now the werre hath under fote,  
 Till god him ſelf therof do bote.  
 For alle thing, which god hath wrought,  
 In erthe, werre it bringeth to nought.  
 The chirche is brent, the preſt is ſlain,  
 The wiſe, the maide is eke forlain,  
 The lawe is lore and god unferved,  
 I not what mede he hath deſerved,

Hic loquitur con-  
 tra motores guerre,  
 que non ſolum ho-  
 micidii ſed univerſi  
 mundi deſolationis  
 mater exiſtit.



That fuche werres ledeth inne.  
 If that he do it for to winne,  
 Firſt to accompte his grete coſte,  
 Forth with the folke that he hath loſte  
 As to the worldes reckeninge,  
 There ſhall he finde no winninge.  
 And if he do it to purchace  
 The heven, mede of fuche a grace  
 I can nought ſpeke, and netheles  
 Criſt hath commaunded love and pees.  
 And who that worcheth the revers,  
 I trowe his mede is full divers.  
 And ſithen thanne that we finde,  
 That werres in her owne kinde  
 Ben toward god of no deſerte  
 And eke they bringen in pouerte  
 Of worldes good, it is merveile  
 Among the men what it may eile,  
 That they a pees ne connen ſette.  
 I trowe ſinne be the lette,  
 And every mede of ſinne is deth.  
 So wote I never howe it geth.  
 But we, that ben of o beleve  
 Among us ſelf, this wolde I leve,  
 That better it were pees to cheſe  
 Than ſo by double weie leſe.

Apoſtolus.      Sti-  
 pendium      peccati  
 mors eſt.

I not if that it now ſo ſtonde,  
 But this a man may underſtonde,  
 Who that theſe olde bokes redeth,  
 That covetiſe is one, which ledeth

And broughte first the werres inne.  
At Grece if that I shall beginne,  
There was it proved howe it stood  
To Perse, whiche was full of good.  
They maden werre in speciall  
And so they didden over all,  
Where great richesse was in londe,  
So that they lesten nothing stonde  
Unwerred, but onliche Archade.

For there they no werres made  
Because it was barein and pouer,  
Wherof they mighte nought recouer  
And thus pouerte was forbore.  
He that nought had nought hath lore.  
But yet it is a wonder thinge,  
Whan that a riche worthy kinge  
Or other lord, what so he be,  
Woll axe and claime properte  
In thing, to whiche he hath no right,  
But only of his grete might.  
For this may every man well wite,  
That bothe kinde and lawe write  
Expreffely stonden there ayein.  
But he mot nedes somewhat fain,  
All though there be no reson inne,  
Which secheth cause for to winne.  
For wit, that is with will oppressed,  
Whan covetise him hath adressed  
And alle reson put away,  
He can well finde such a way

*Nota, quod Greci  
omnem terram fer-  
tilem debellabant,  
sed tantum Archad-  
iam pro eo, quod  
pauper et sterilis  
fuit, pacifice dimi-  
serunt.*

To werre, where as ever him liketh,  
 Wherof that he the worde entriketh,  
 That many a man of him compleigneth.  
 But yet alway some cause he feigneth  
 And of his wrongfull herte he demeth,  
 That all is well, what ever him semeth,  
 Be so that he may winne inough.  
 For as the true man to the plough  
 Only to the gaignage entendeth,  
 Right so the werriour despendeth  
 His time and hath no conscience.  
 And in this point for evidence  
 Of hem that suche werres make,  
 Thou might a great ensample take,  
 How they her tirannie excusen  
 Of that they wrongful werres usen,  
 And how they stonde of one accorde,  
 The fouldeour forth with the lorde,  
 The pouer man forth with the riche,  
 As of corage they ben liche  
 To make werres and to pille  
 For lucre, and for none other skille,  
 Wherof a propre tale I rede,  
 As it whilom befelle in dede.

Hic declarat per exemplum contra istos principes seu alios quoscunque illicite guerre motores, et narrat de quodam pirata in partibus marinis spoliatore notissimo, qui cum captus fuisset, et in iudicium

Of him, whom all this erthe dradde,  
 Whan he the world so overladde  
 Through werre, as it fortunèd is,  
 King Alifaundre, I rede this,  
 How in a marche, where he lay,  
 It fell parchaunce upon a day



A rover of the see was nome,  
 Which many a man had overcome  
 And slain and take her good away.  
 This pilour as the bokes say,  
 A famous man in sondry stede  
 Was of the werkes, whiche he dede.  
 This prisoner to-fore the kinge  
 Was brought, and therupon this thinge  
 In audience he was accused,  
 And he his dede hath nought excused  
 And praid the king to done him right  
 And said : Sire, if I were of might,  
 I have an herte liche unto thine,  
 For if thy power were mine,  
 My wille is most in speciall  
 To risle and geten over all  
 The large worldes good about.  
 But for I lede a pouer route  
 And am as who saith at mischefe,  
 The name of pilour and of thefe  
 I bere, and thou which routes great  
 Might lede and take thy beyete  
 And dost right as I wolde do,  
 Thy name is nothing cleped so,  
 But thou art named emperour.  
 Our dedes ben of one colour  
 And in effecte of one deserte,  
 But thy richesse and my pouerte  
 They be nought taken evenliche,  
 And netheles he that is riche

coram rege Alexan-  
 dro productus et de  
 latricino accusatus  
 dixit : O Alexander,  
 vere quia cum paucis  
 sociis spoliatorum causa  
 naves tantum exploro,  
 ego latrunculus vo-  
 cor, tu autem quia  
 cum infinita bellato-  
 rum multitudine uni-  
 versam terram subju-  
 gando spoliasti, impe-  
 rator diceris, itaque  
 status tuus a statu meo  
 differt, sed eodem  
 animo condicionem  
 parilem habemus. A-  
 lexander vero eius au-  
 daciam in responsio-  
 ne comprobans ip-  
 sum penes se familia-  
 rem retinuit. Et sic  
 bellicosus bellatori  
 complacuit.

This day, to morwe he may be pouer  
And in contrarie also recouer  
A pouer man to grete richesſe.  
Men ſain forthy let rightwiſeneſſe  
Be peiſed even in the balaunce.

The king his hardy contenaunce  
Behelde, and herd his wordes wiſe  
And ſaid unto him in this wiſe :  
Thin anſwere I have underſtonde,  
Wherof my will is, that thou ſtonde  
In my ſervice and ſtill abide.  
And forth with al the ſame tide  
He hath him terme of life witholde  
The more and for he ſhuld ben holde,  
He made him knight and yaf him lond,  
Whiche afterward was of his honde  
An orped knight in many a ſtede  
And great prowefſe of armes dede,  
As the croniques it recorden.  
And in this wiſe they accorden,  
The whiche of condicion  
Be ſet upon deſtruction.  
Such capitain ſuch retenue.  
But for to ſee to what iſſue  
The king befalleth at the laſte,  
It is great wonder that men caſte  
Her herte upon ſuch wrong to winne,  
Where no beyete may ben inne,  
And doth diſeſe on every ſide,  
But whan reſon is put aſide



And will governeth the corage,  
 The faucon which fleeth ramage  
 And suffreth no thing in the way,  
 Wherof that he may take his pray,  
 Is nought more set upon ravine  
 Than thilke man, whiche his covine  
 Hath set in fuche a maner wise.  
 For all the world ne may suffise  
 To wil, whiche is nought resonable.

Wherof ensample concordable  
 Lich to this point, of which I mene,  
 Was upon Alisaundre sene,  
 Whiche hadde set all his entent  
 So as fortune with him went,  
 That reson might him non governe,  
 But of his wille he was so sterne,  
 That all the worlde he overran  
 And what him list he toke and wan.  
 In Ynde the superiour  
 Whan that he was full conquerour  
 And had his wilfull pourpos wonne  
 Of all this erth under the sonne  
 This king homward to Macedoine  
 Whan that he cam to Babiloine  
 And wende moste in his empire  
 As he, which was hole lorde and fire,  
 In honour for to be received,  
 Most sodenliche he was deceived  
 And with strong poison envenimed.  
 And as he hath the world mistimed

Hic secundum gesta Alexandri de guerris illicitis ponit confessor exemplum dicens, quod quamvis Alexander sua potencia totius mundi victor sibi subjugarat imperium, ipse tandem mortis victoria subjugatus cuncti-potentis sententiam evadere non potuit.



Nought as he shulde with his wit,  
 Nought as he wolde, it was acquit.  
 Thus was he slain, that whilom slough,  
 And he, which riche was inough  
 This day, to morwe he hadde nought.  
 And in such wise as he hath wrought  
 In disturbaunce of worldes pees,  
 His werre he fond than endeles,  
 In which for ever discomfite  
 He was. Lo, now for what profite  
 Of werre it helpeth for to ride,  
 For covetise and worldes pride  
 To flee the worldes men aboute  
 As bestes, whiche gone there oute.  
 For every life, which reson can,  
 Oweth wel to knowe, that a man  
 Ne shulde through no tirannie  
 Lich to these other bestes deie,  
 Til kinde wolde for him sende.  
 I not how he it might amende,  
 Which taketh away for evermore  
 The life, that he may nought restore.

*Confessor.* Forthy my sone, in alle wey  
 Be wel avised I the prey  
 Of slaughter that thou be coupable  
 Withoute cause resonable.

*Amans.* My fader, understonde it is,  
 That ye have said, but over this  
 I pray you telle me nay or ye,  
 To passe over the great fee

To werre and fle the Sarafin  
Is that the lawe? Sone min,  
To preche and suffre for the feith  
That I have herd the gospel faith,  
But for to fle that here I nought,  
Crist with his owne deth hath bought  
All other men and made hem fre  
In token of parfit charite,  
And after that he taught him selve  
Whan he was dede these other twelve  
Of his apostles went aboute  
The holy feith to prechen oute,  
Wherof the deth in sondry place  
They suffre, and so god of his grace  
The feith of Crist hath made arise.  
But if they wolde in other wise  
By werre have brought in the creaunce,  
It hadde yet stonde in balaunce.  
And that may proven in the dede  
For what man the croniques rede,  
Fro first that holy chirche hath weived  
To preche and hath the fwerd received,  
Wherof the werres ben begonne,  
A great partie of that was wonne  
To Cristes feith stant now miswent.  
God do therof amendement  
So as he wot what is the best.  
But sone, if thou wilt live in rest  
Of conscience well assised,  
Er that thou flee, be wel avised,

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For man, as tellen us the clerkes,  
 Hath god above all erthly werkes  
 Ordeigned to be principall,  
 And eke of soule in speciall  
 He is made lich to the godhede,  
 So fit it wel to taken hede  
 And for to loke on every fide,  
 Er that thou falle on homicide,  
 Which sinne is now so generall,  
 That it wel nigh stant overall  
 In holy chirche and elles where.  
 But all the while it is so there,  
 The world mot nede fare amis.  
 For whan the well of pite is  
 Through covetise of worldes good  
 Defouled with sheding of blood,  
 The remenaunte of folke about  
 Unnethe stonden in any doubt  
 To werre eche other and to slee,  
 So it is all nought worth a stre  
 The charite, wherof we prechen,  
 For we do no thing as we techen.  
 And thus the blinde conscience  
 Of pees hath lost thilke evidence,  
 Which Crist upon this erthe taught.  
 Now may men se mordre and manslaught  
 Liche as it was by daies olde,  
 Whan men the finnes bought and solde,  
 In Grece afore Cristes feith,  
 I rede as the cronique saith

*Facilitas venie oc-  
 casionem prebet  
 delinquendi.*



Touchend of this matere thus,  
In thilke time how Peleus  
His owne brother Phocus slough.  
But for he hadde gold inough  
To yive, his sinne was despenfed  
With golde, wherof it was compensed.  
Achaustus which with Venus was  
Her prest affoiled in that cas  
Al were there no repentaunce.  
And as the boke maketh remembraunce,  
It telleth of Medee also,  
Of that she slough her sones two  
Egeus in the same plite  
Hath made her of her sinne quite.  
The sone eke of Amphioras,  
Whos righte name Almeus was,  
His moder slough Eriphiele.  
But Achilo the prest and he,  
So as the bokes it recorden,  
For certain some of golde accorden  
That thilke horrible sinfull dede  
Affoiled was, and thus for mede  
Of worldes good it falleth ofte,  
That homicide is set alofte  
Here in this life, but after this  
There shall be knowe, how that it is  
Of hem that suche thinges wirche,  
And how also that holy chirche  
Let suche sinnes passe quite,  
And how they wolde hem self acquite

Of dedely werres, that they make.  
 For who that wold ensample take,  
 The lawe, whiche is naturel,  
 By wey of kinde sheweth wel,  
 That homicide in no degre,  
 Which werreth ayein charite,  
 Among the menne shulde dwelle.  
 For after that the bokes telle,  
 To seche in all the worlde riche  
 Men shall nought finde upon his liche  
 A beste for to take his prey,  
 And sithen kind hath suche a wey,  
 Than is it wonder of a man,  
 Which kinde hath and reson can,  
 That he woll outhere more or lasse  
 His kinde and reson overpasse  
 And slee that is to him semblable.  
 So is the man nought resonable  
 Ne kinde, and that is nought honeste,  
 Whan he is worse than a beste.

Nota secundum Solinum contra homicidas de natura cuiusdam avis faciem ad similitudinem humanam habentis, que cum de preda sua hominem juxta fluvium occiderit videritque in aqua similem sibi occisum, statim pre dolore moritur.

Among the bokes, which I finde,  
 Solins speketh of a wonder kinde  
 And saith of foules there is one,  
 Whiche hath a face of blood and bone  
 Like to a man in resemblance.  
 And if it falle so parchaunce  
 As he, whiche is a foule of pray,  
 That he a man finde in his way,  
 He woll him sleen, if that he may.  
 But afterward the same day,

Whan he hath eten all his felle  
And that shall be beside a welle,  
In whiche he woll drinke take  
Of his visage and seeth the make,  
That he hath slain, anone he thenketh  
Of his misdede, and it forthenketh  
So greatly, that for pure sorwe  
He liveth nought till on the morwe.  
By this ensample it may well sue,  
That man shall homicide escheue,  
For ever is mercy good to take.  
But if the lawe it hath forsake  
And that justice is there ayein,  
Ful oftetime I have herd sain  
Amonges hem that werres hadden,  
That they somwhile her cause ladden  
By mercy, whan they might have slain,  
Wherof that they were after sain.  
And sone, if that thou wolt recorde  
The vertue of misericorde,  
Thou sighe never thilke place,  
Where it was used, lacke grace,  
For every lawe and every kinde  
The mannes wit to mercy binde,  
And namely the worthy knightes,  
Whan that they stonden most uprightes  
And ben most mighty for to greve,  
They shulden thanne most releve  
Him, whom they mighten overthrowe,  
And by ensample a man may knowe,



Hic ponit confessor  
exemplum de pietate  
contra homicidium  
in guerris habenda,  
et narrat, qualiter A-  
chilles una cum filio  
suo Thelapho contra  
regem Mesece, qui  
tunc Theucer voca-  
batur, bellum inie-  
runt, et cum Achilles  
dictum regem in bello  
prostratum occidere  
voluisset, Thelaphus  
pietate motus ipsum  
clipeo cooperiens ve-  
niam pro rege a patre  
postulavit, pro quo  
facto ipse rex adhuc  
vivens Thephalum  
regni sui heredem li-  
bera voluntate con-  
stituit.

He may nought failen of his mede  
That hath mercy. For this I rede,  
In a cronique I finde thus,  
Whan Achilles with Thelaphus  
His sone toward Troie were,  
It fell hem er they comen there  
Ayein Theucer the kinge of Mese  
To make werre and for to sese  
His lond, as they that wolden regne  
And Theucer put out of his regne.  
And thus the marches they assaile,  
But Theucer yaf to hem bataile,  
They foughten on both sides faste,  
But so it hapneth ate laste  
This worthy Greke this Achilles  
The king amonge all other ches,  
As he that was cruel and felle,  
With swerd in honde on him he felle,  
And smote him with a dethes wounde,  
That he unhorfed fell to grounde.  
Achilles upon him alight  
And wolde anone, as he wel might,  
Have slain him fulliche in the place,  
But Thelaphus his faders grace  
For him besought and for pite  
Praith, that he wolde let him be,  
And cast his shield betwene hem two.  
Achilles axeth him why so.  
And Thelaphus his cause tolde  
And faith, that he is mochel holde,

For whilom Theucer in a stede  
 Great grace and socour to him dede,  
 And faith, that he him wolde acquite  
 And praith his fader to respite.  
 Achilles tho withdrough his honde,  
 But all the power of the londe  
 Whan that they figh her king thus take  
 They fled and han the feld forsake.  
 The Grekes unto the chace falle  
 And for the moste part of alle  
 Of that contre the lordes great  
 They toke and wonne a great beyete.  
 And anone after this victoire  
 The king, whiche hadde memoire,  
 Upon the grete mercy thought,  
 Which Thelaphus toward him wrought,  
 And in presence of all the londe  
 He toke him faire by the honde  
 And in this wise he gan to say :  
 My sone, I mot by double way  
 Love and desire thin encrees,  
 First for thy fader Achilles  
 Whilom full many a day er this,  
 Whan that I shulde have fare amis,  
 Rescouffe did in my quarele  
 And kept all min estate in hele,  
 How so there falle now distaunce  
 Amonges us, yet remembraunce  
 I have of mercy, whiche he dede  
 As than, and thou nowe in this stede

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Of gentileſſe and of fraunchiſe  
 Haſt do mercy the ſame wiſe,  
 So woll I nought, that any time  
 Be loſt of that thou haſt do byme,  
 For how ſo this fortune falle  
 Yet ſtant my truſte aboven alle  
 For the mercy whiche I now finde,  
 That thou wolt after this be kinde,  
 And for that ſuche is min eſpeir  
 And for my ſone and for min heire  
 I the receive and all my londe  
 I yive and ſeſe into thin honde.  
 And in this wiſe they accorde,  
 The cauſe was miſericorde,  
 The lordes do her obeifaunce  
 To Thelaphus, and purveaunce  
 Was made, ſo that he was coroned  
 And thus was mercy reguerdoned,  
 Whiche he to Theucer did to-fore.

Confefſor. Lo, this enſample is made therfore,  
 That thou might take remembraunce,  
 My ſone, and whan thou ſeeſt a chaunce  
 Of other mennes paſſion  
 Take pite and compaſſion  
 And let nothing to the be leſ,  
 Which to another man is gref.  
 And after this if thou deſire  
 To ſtonde ayein the vice of ire,  
 Counſeile the with pacience  
 And take into thy conſcience



Mercy to be thy governour,  
So shalt thou fele no rancour,  
Wherof thin herte shall debate  
With homicide ne with hate  
For cheste or for malencolie.  
Thou shalt be softe in compaignie  
Withoutte contek or foolhaste,  
For elles might thou longe waste  
Thy time, er that thou have thy wille  
Of love, for the weder stille  
Men preise and blame the tempestes.

My fader, I woll do your hestes,  
And of this point ye have me taught  
Toward my self the better faught  
I thenke be, while that I live.  
But for als mochel as I am thrive  
Of wrath and all his circumstaunce,  
Yef what ye list to my penaunce  
And axeth further of my life,  
If other wise I be giltif  
Of any thing, that toucheth sinne.

Amans.

My sone, er we depart a twinne,  
I shall behinde no thing leve.

Confessor.

My gode fader, by your leve  
Than axeth forth what so ye liste,  
For I have in you such a triste  
As ye that be my foule hele,  
That ye fro me nothing wol hele,  
For I shall telle you the trouthe.

Amans.

My sone, art thou coulpatible of slouthe

Confessor.

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In any point, which to him longeth ?

Amans. My fader, of tho points me longeth  
To wite plainly, what they mene,  
So that I may me shrive clene.

Confessor. Now herken, I shal tho points devise,  
And understond well min apprise.  
For shrifte stant of no value  
To him, that woll him nought vertue  
To leve of vice the folie,  
For worde is wind, but the maistrice  
Is, that a man him self defende  
Of thing, whiche is nought to commende,  
Wherof ben fewe now a day.  
And nethes so as I may  
Make unto thy memorie knowe  
The points of flouthe, thou shalt knowe.

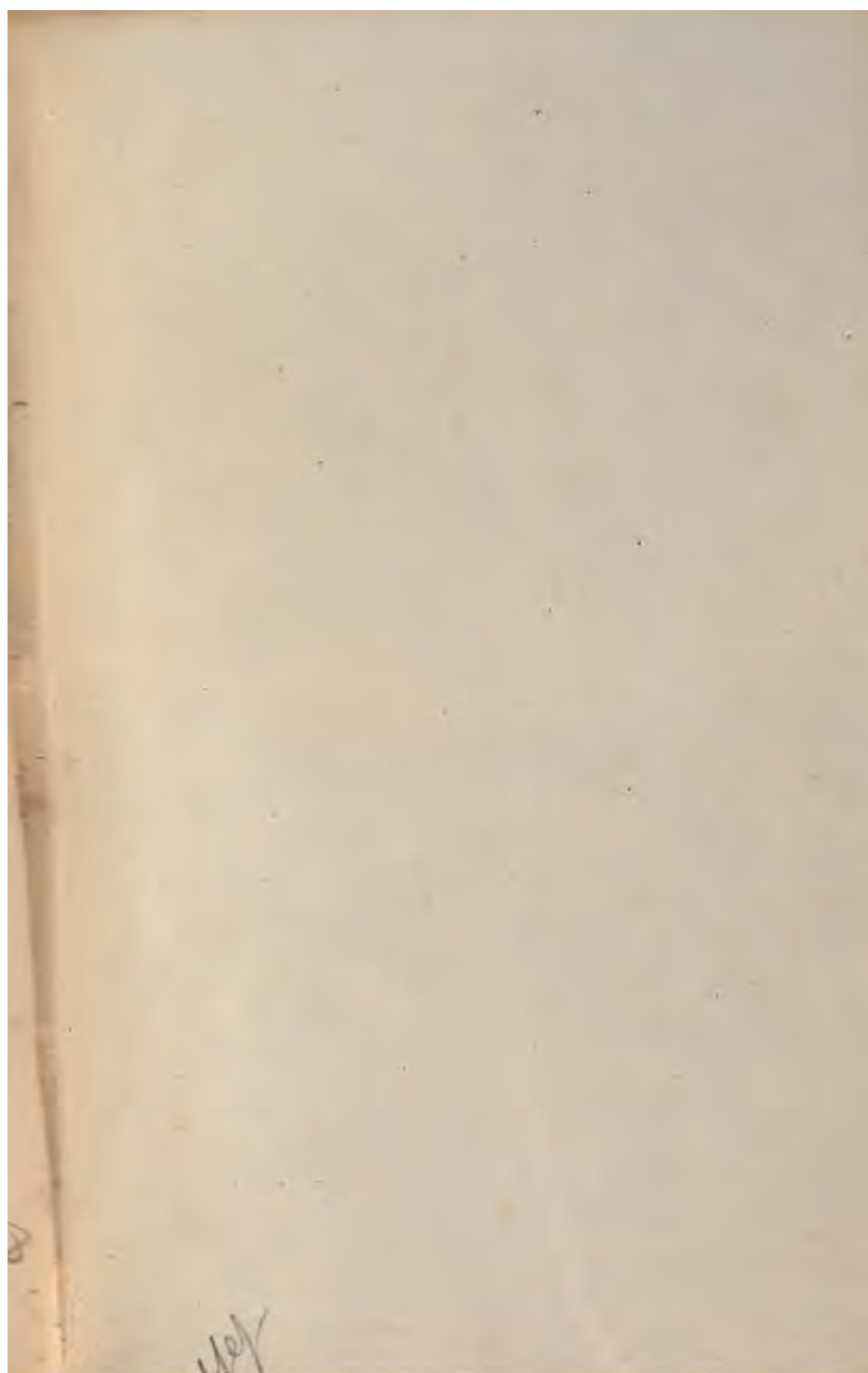
*Explicit liber tercius.*

END OF VOL. I.

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